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WAR LETTERS OF EDMOND GENET

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FROM THE FUND

IN MEMORY OF

FREDERIC HILBORN HALL

(Class of 1910)

1889–1910

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WAR LETTERS
OF
EDMOND GENET

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Edmond Charles Clinton Genet.

From a photograph taken in Paris, September 4, 1916.

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WAR LETTERS

OF

EDMOND GENET

THE FIRST AMERICAN AVIATOR KILLED FLYING THE STARS AND STRIPES

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

GRACE ELLERY CHANNING

PREFATORY NOTE BY

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1918

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JUN 13 1918
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TO

THOSE AMERICANS

COMPANIONS OF EDMOND GENET

OF THE FOREIGN LEGION OR THE ESCADRILLE

AND TO THE THOUSANDS MORE

WHO HEARING, EVEN BEFORE AMERICA, THE CALL ANSWERED FOR HER

"PAYING WITH THEIR BODIES FOR THEIR SOULS' DESIRE"

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED

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PREFATORY NOTE

BY JOHN JAY CHAPMAN

THE Genets are descended from Edme Charles Genet, who was secretary and interpreter to the Comte de Provence (subsequently Louis XVIII), and who died in 1780. Edme Charles, having lived long in England, became in France an authority on English affairs and was a publicist of some importance. His numerous works consist of historical essays, memoirs, and letters about the British constitution, British politics, and current events in England. Two of his children became distinguished, the first, Edmond C., was the famous, not to say notorious, Citizen Genet, whom the Revolutionary government in France sent as ambassador to the United States in 1792, and whose indiscretions led to his recall. He never returned to France, but settled at Albany, and subsequently married the daughter of Governor Clinton.

The Citizen's sister, Henriette (Mme. Campan), was one of the most remarkable women of her day. Inasmuch as her father was an intimate of the King's brother, she was, as it were, born at court, and being an infant prodigy she received her education under the charge of distinguished poets, musicians, and savants. At the age of fourteen she

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became governess to the children of Marie Antoinette, whose dearest friend she remained for twenty years. When the King and Queen were thrown into jail she begged to be allowed to accompany them, but this was denied her. It was to her hands that Louis XVI confided the most secret documents, family trinkets, and locks of the royal hair at the time of his confinement in the prison of Feuillants, in 1792. Among these mementos was a brooch sent by Marie Antoinette to Citizen Genet, and which is to-day worn by the mother of the aviator. Madam Campan after the fall of the monarchy supported herself by founding a school for young girls, which became famous immediately and was afterward turned into a national academy by Napoleon. Hortense Beauharnais, stepdaughter of Napoleon, was one of Madame Campan's pupils. On the fall of the First Empire the Bourbons persecuted Mme. Campan for having accepted the protection of Napoleon and treated her with most astounding and cruel ingratitude, considering the devotion she had shown to their family in former years. She died in disgrace and poverty in 1822 at the age of seventy, and left memoirs of the old court which are among the best that exist.

The aviator, Edmond C. Genet, is a great-great-grandson of the Citizen.

During the summer of 1915 I met young Genet in Paris. He was at that time a companion of my boy Victor in the Foreign Legion. Genet was a shy, neatly made, small, blond youth, and only a

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wizard could have divined the burning ambition that lay concealed beneath his quiet demeanor. The fact was that the Americans in the Foreign Legion represented the idealism of the youth of America. They were a flight of birds from all over the country. Mere romanticism and the desire for adventure would not have brought them together; and the more we find out about these boys the more we see that in each of them there was a soul's history that led up to this especial consummation. They are national characters—symbols of America. In life and in death they express the relation of America to the war.

I see them hasting toward the light
Where war's dim watchfires glow;
The stars that burn in Europe's night
Conduct them to the foe.

As when a flower feels the sun
And opens to the sky,
Knowing their dream has just begun
They hasten forth to die.

All that philosophy might guess
These children of the light
In one bright act of death compress,
Then vanish from our sight.

Like meteors on a midnight sky
They break—so clear, so brief—
Their glory lingers on the eye
And leaves no room for grief.

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And when to joy old sorrows turn,
To spring war's winter long,
Their blood in every heart will burn,
Their life in every song.

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INTRODUCTION

EDMOND CHARLES CLINTON GENET was born in Ossining, New York, on the 9th of November, 1896. He was the traditional youngest son of the fairy-tale, predestined to achievement—so much the youngest of three brothers that for all purposes of play and occupation he grew up an only child, finding his pleasures and interests for himself. No doubt this fact contributed to his determining trait, independence of thought and action.

He was educated in private and public schools and at Mount Pleasant Academy, for which institution he had all the love of a student for his alma mater.

Although he was destined to end his days in another element, the earliest attraction of the boy's heart seems to have been for the sea: everything pertaining to it fascinated him. When the other boys had military suits, Edmond's must be a naval uniform; a little photograph of the three brothers shows Edmond as a cherub thus distinguished. But at the mature age of nine he definitely dedicated himself, and in the manner of doing so as definitely proclaimed what was to be the key-note of his character and conduct all through the life,—the ability to think out for himself a course of action, act upon it, and present his reasons (if at all)

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afterward. It must be said that his reasons were usually excellent ones.

At nine, then, he wrote to the authorities in Washington for an outline of studies necessary for a career in the navy. The arrival of the official envelope with the desired information first apprised his family that their "Third" had begun making history for himself. From the curriculum laid down in that letter Edmond thereafter firmly declined to depart, to the considerable inconvenience and dismay of his successive instructors.

At the age of ten there befell one of those small prophetic miracles with which the story of genius or heroism is always more or less filled. He invented an aeroplane which was exhibited and later formed a part of the memorial exhibition of the young aviator.

When he was but sixteen the father died, after a long illness, during which the two elder sons, renouncing Princeton, went to work in an automobile industry. But they reckoned ill who left the "Third" out of anything real that was going forward. Edmond, as usual, took counsel of himself, walked a long way to the model "Chilmark Dairy," and applied to its owner, V. Everit Macy, for work before and after school. Thereafter he worked daily from six to eight, going home to change his clothes for school, and changing again after school to work again from six to eight, Sundays and all. It was Mr. Macy's interest in the conscientious boy which later secured the necessary congressional

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influence to make him appointee for the Annapolis examinations.

While the outcome of these was still in doubt and Edmond in corresponding agony of spirit, he presented himself at the Navy Yard for the required physical examination. In the course of the visit it was suggested to him that if he did not win the appointment he might still enlist in the navy with a prospect of advancement. The appointment going to another, this was what he ultimately did, informing the family of the accomplished fact, according to custom.

From this point the letters carry the record through the brief four years which were all the time granted for earth, but which abundantly sufficed for immortality.

Rarely is the cycle of a life so swiftly, so surely, and so gloriously fulfilled—or so satisfyingly foreshadowed. The egg does not more completely contain the chicken than every trait and quality of the young soldier-aviator of France was contained and manifest in the little boy at Ossining. The notes struck in the first letters of the series by the sixteen-year-old lad make up the full, harmonious chord of the last.

Everything about him, indeed, seems to have been from everlasting to everlasting. From babyhood he showed the feeling for music which pervaded his life. Standing on tiptoe he would reach out "real tunes" for himself with effective small fingers, or desert his playfellows to go off by himself and paint

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Indians, among other things, such as years later he was to depict again on the walls of the Lafayette Escadrille headquarters, or to carry with him as the insignia of his squadrilla, into the air. The whole character seems to have been there ready-made from the first, requiring nothing but growth and ripening, processes which in the maturing fields of war went on with a rapidity so precocious that watching it in these letters is like watching the intensified unfolding of a flower on a moving-picture screen. One sees him, in the last months, taking possession of himself as of the air.

A prescience of fame is probably very common to natures destined for it. The thought of it was never far from Edmond. Even through the boyish despondency of the first letters breathes the intimation, "Even if I have failed twice and am the black sheep of the family, perhaps some day in the distant future I will turn out to be a white one and be something worth while."

Writing from France, he asks to have an early press-letter kept for him. "Some day when I get renowned enough for my letters to be published, I want the first ones to look back to. I've made quite a start toward fame already, haven't I?" he jestingly says. And he attached serious value to his diary—"one of my most important assets"—a diary of which he is able to amazingly record that in five years he has not once failed to write in it. "If I am not making history, at least I am writing it." He was doing both.

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From the trenches he wrote reams, in a fine, microscopic hand of extreme clearness—to the "dear little Mother," to the "two best brothers any fellow ever had," to a score of friends. Some of these letters falling into the hands of Mr. Walter B. Mahony, Mrs. Genet's legal adviser, suggested to him that a book should be made, and the genius of chance led simultaneously to his office an old college chum and friend, Emery Pottle, himself back from a year's service at Pont-à-Mousson, Verdun, and Bar-le-Duc, with a corps which had won the *fourragère*, and whose members, Lovell, Willis, Marr, and others later became Genet's companions of the Escadrille. Unaware of this connection, Mr. Pottle promptly volunteered to make the little book, which was barely under way when he returned, as Lieutenant Pottle, to the front, leaving the uncompleted task to its next heir—the present editor, who had all unconsciously been qualifying for it by a visit to the Escadrille headquarters at Ham. Its members were still mourning the loss of MacConnell and Genet only a few weeks before. Edmond's sketches, the piano—all were still as he wrote of them, and the famous "Whiskey," camouflaged for the occasion as "William," was gravely and rather insistently pressed on our attention. Within a week of that visit the charming French officer, de Laage, was killed by accident; within a month Willis was a prisoner in the German lines and two more of the little group had been disabled —one, as I think, being Norman Hall.

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Thus by a coincidence which would have delighted Genet himself, I was to come straight from his own headquarters to his own book, and from the eager inquiries of his companions for another old comrade, to receive from that comrade's hands the unfinished record of the youngest of their number.

One does not refuse gifts so clearly marked "from Destiny."

Genet seems to have had the faculty of living two lives simultaneously, with a cuttlefish tenacity for holding on to all things at once. Tenacious he was in everything—of purposes, of friendships, of the family bond and interests, of the least little observances: above all was the tenacity of tenderness which kept him in the shell-swept trenches of Champagne mindful of the smallest things of home. The Front could not obliterate Ossining, nor the bursting hell about him make him forget to write his notes of courtesy; he is mortified when, in the midst of battle his correspondence gets ahead of him. All the early traits abide and strengthen; the little, conscientious care for money, the great care for his friends, and especially for his family. From earning a citation in the awful slaughter of Champagne he turns to write bubbling letters of fun to a girl chum, or gentle admonitions to his mother. "Have you thought to write to so and so?" "Have you perhaps run in to make a little call on ——?" It is the same careful courtesy which later illustrates itself in the little notes it was

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his habit to leave for his hostess in Paris, when on any occasion he left the house before the family was up, mornings, to say where he had gone and when he would return. He was carefully kind as well, finding time in the midst of warfare to be precise about the denominational needs of a comrade's stamp collection. There are no unconsidered trifles in his world: the number of things he kept in hand and mind fill one with envy for the vitality of youth.

Between the ages of sixteen and twenty this predestined adventurer contrived to be present in three wars: he was at Vera Cruz (where he was first to answer the call for volunteers for a dangerous landing-party); at Hayti; in the Foreign Legion when that glorious force was all but annihilated; and finally culminated his career fitly in the famous Lafayette Escadrille. His sketch of the battle of Champagne tells what an eye and brain he brought to all this and justifies high hopes of that Diary, still held in France.

"Smiler" was the name he went by in the Escadrille, yet the boy had his troubles: there was even a brief tragedy of the heart, barely hinted in the book, and more than a tinge of melancholy in his temperament. But on the whole it is impossible not to feel he had a very good time of it, something sunny in his own nature contributing. One may search the hundreds of letters left, for a rare word of complaint of hardships: if mentioned at all, it is as part of the picture. True, this is the spirit of armies, but significant in so young a soldier.

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The sincerely religious strain may have come to him equally from his blended Quaker and Catholic ancestry—or from a devout mother. He never misses a chance of church and communion. On his first Sunday in Paris he writes back of a hymn he has just heard, "If I am taken in battle and you hear of it, will you have a little service and in it sing Hymn 621?" Later he adds another. Both were sung at the memorial service held for him in Ossining—his loved home town.

Between the first and second portion of these letters there exists a gap. That gap was filled by the most momentous act of his life. Edmond Genet deliberately deserted the United States navy, but he did so in order to enter a greater thing—the war. He took this decision, which was to determine his entire future life and, as he foresaw, in all probability his death, with his accustomed independence, and acted with his accustomed thoroughness, consulting nobody. At the end of a cheerful holiday—the last he was ever to spend with them—he walked out of the home, after the usual loving farewells, ostensibly to join his ship, reappearing some days later with the quiet announcement that he had taken his passports for France and was about to enter the French army. Neither prayers nor tears could move him. "I have done nothing wrong—nothing to be ashamed of," was his quiet assertion, "though I had to tell one lie—about my age."

The boy, not yet eighteen, had gone boldly to

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the French consul, giving his age as twenty-one and his errand—to inquire concerning a family estate. The demand created no astonishment coming from one of his French name. It was necessary, however, he was told, to go to Washington, and to Washington he went. Something unexplained and romantic hangs about this entire incident—again as of predestined things. His ship was delayed: he was detained almost a whole month in New York, subject all that time to arrest as a deserter. He went to theatres, took no particular pains to conceal himself. No inquiry of any kind was made for him until after he had actually reached France, and when it came it was accompanied by an offer of full pardon if he would return. He had no idea of returning.

But though he had heard his call so clearly and answered it, apparently so lightly, not lightly, therefore, did the decision weigh upon him. The years of his service in France were haunted by one fixed desire which became little short of an obsession—to obtain, somehow, the removal, from an otherwise blameless record, of this one blot. The higher he climbed in the scale of honor, the keener became his determination, pursued with all that tenacity of which he was so capable. His letters to his mother, to his brothers, to a friendly chaplain are filled with this insistence. It is a distress to him when his new friends praise him. "What would they think if they knew?" A kind of benign fatality, however, watches over him: He him-

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self says: "All the good things come out, nothing of the bad." Finally he makes confession to one of the best of his friends, Major Parker, and has a lighter heart. "We are going to have clean decks some day," he writes cheerily to his mother. But the cloud constantly returned. Risking his life daily, already cited for bravery, about to be decorated, and with less and less illusion as to his chances of surviving the war, yet his main concern is for that unexpunged blot. How sensitive of honor he was is shown in many a little outburst: "Every time an article comes out, like Rockwell's, it cuts me like a knife!" Most moving of all is the final cry:

"If anything should happen to me over here, it would be so much easier to meet it if I knew I was O. K. with my own loved country. . . . The only thing which ever impressed me about the Burial Service is the question—'O Death, where is thy sting?'—I know now that it would hold its sting for me if I met it with that blot upon my record."

History may be left to deal with that still unexpunged blot and decide where it really belongs. Meanwhile, anticipating that verdict, to many of us it will seem to plead aloud and eloquently—but not for the boy:

"Forgiven be the State he loved
The one brief wrong, the single blot;
Forgotten be the stain removed,
Her righted record shows it not."

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It is impossible now to calculate in any known terms the service these first flaming messengers of freedom rendered to America, incomparably more than to France. Time will justly appraise this too. Seeger, Chapman, Prince, Rockwell, "all the Braves," as Paul Rockwell called them, together with those unnamed, unnumbered thousands who fought with Canada—will be the real, immortal heroes of this war. These are they who seeking nothing but their country's honor, found, in the noble phrase of one—Harry Butters—"honorable advancement" for their own souls, and in the darkest hour of our history kept burning in Europe a lamp of faith in America which never quite went out.

Among them all there was no braver than this youngest brother—the "Benjamin" of his group, as Captain Thénault called him in his touching funeral address. All temptation to mourn for what he might have achieved falls before the actual thing he did achieve—at twenty years.

At sixteen, he had written of the burial of the Vera Cruz dead: "Do you know, one almost wishes he could be honored that way," and later, of Victor Chapman's death: "There was a death no man would shrink from finding." "To have the flags on one's casket," he thought, "would be a great compensation" for dying, and his last wishes were that the flags of both countries might float above his grave—"to show that I died for both."

A French writer, celebrating the presence of

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the American flag in France last July, recounted this:

"Some months ago a young American aviator, struck by a German ball, fell from the sky upon our front. When they removed his garments, in order to confide him to the earth, it was found that he was wearing his flag, sown with stars, wrapped about his body. He had not the right to display it. We made of it his shroud.

"To-day, that flag floats upon the wind beside our own."

More blessed than this brave companion, for Genet there was reserved a signal distinction—a special felicity—the fulfilment of his early wish beyond his wildest imaginings. For after the happiness of seeing his country enter the war, it was his singular honor to be the first American to give his life under the Stars and Stripes.

And for this bright immortality of fame Edmond Genet would have been content to die many times.

GRACE ELLERY CHANNING.

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AMERICA

IN THE NAVY—VERA CRUZ AND HAYTI

1914

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To His Mother

Chilmark Farm, Ossining-on-Hudson, N. Y.
The Dairy, Feb. 20th, '14.

Dear Mother, . . .

As for me and the late exams, dear little Mother, I feel certain that I flunked on the Arithmetic and Geometry and almost sure that I failed on the Algebra too. I feel mighty down and out. I don't feel as if I had any brains worth anything at all. Here all the money, time and worry spent since last Spring has gone for nothing—failure. I wonder what is meant for me in this world anyway? Now I've just got to go back to the Station, face the bunch, tell them I've been a rank failure and be just one of them—a common ordinary seaman. I hardly care what becomes of me. What's the use when I can't seem to gain anything but failure? I don't feel that I have any more fight left in me. Now I'm going out into the World and hit it hard and let it hit me just as hard and harder in return.

Please don't worry about me, Mother, I sort of feel as if I were the black sheep of the family, but perhaps that is because of my nature and possibly I'll get along better when I am older. . . .

When I get back to the Station I am going to try to get into the Signal School if possible. Perhaps I will be able to do something there, but the

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way I feel now I really don't feel as if I was capable of accomplishing anything at all. . . .

Cheer up, Mother dear; even if I have failed twice and am a black sheep perhaps some day in the distant future I will turn out to be a white one and be something worth while. I feel about certain that Annapolis will never see me though.

Your loving and affectionate son,

EDMOND.

U. S. S. *Constellation*,
Newport, R. I.
March 10th, 1914. Evening.

I guess the game is up about Annapolis. Mr. Pearce showed me the Army and Navy Register this morning and in it was a list of candidates who passed and are going into the Academy. I've failed again and God only knows what that means to me. I can't tell you how I feel. It would break me down. I feel miserable enough now for having to write and tell you this disheartening news. You've written a good many letters to me trying to encourage me to look on the brightest side and I thank you with all my heart, dear little Mother, for doing it but I don't see much of a bright side to the future as it looms up before me like a big black cloud. I don't feel as if I had brains enough to get really into the branch of the Navy that I am here training for. I can't master swimming, I have practically lost all desire to try to learn that or any of the many other things required to be known

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before a recruit is sent out. I feel lost and unsteady. I feel stopped up mentally and weak physically. I want to get away—I hardly know where except that I want it to be out of this country and where I can be "gone," if not forever, until I will have made good in something if that will ever be possible for one of my temperament. . . . No notice has come from the Academy yet but don't think that means anything favorable. I expect the report to come in a very few days *rejected*—God, how the word grinds into me! I almost believe I'm going crazy. Only a part of me is here. The rest is off into the future—trying to fathom it and to see where and what is best to begin on. I've determined to remain here anyway until the company goes out on its furlough April 6th, and then, if I succeed in getting by with it by being passed without qualifying in swimming (for I am sure that will be the only way I shall get by in it as I feel sure I won't be able *to* qualify) and I pass in the rest, I shall reconsider staying in the service and fighting on at least for a while longer, but, if I have to stay behind I am positive I shall "jump ship" the very first chance I get and then good-by to the Navy and all the rest I can't keep on with a thing I can't like—it isn't my nature. I love you too much, dear Mother, to want to go against your wishes so please, please don't make your wishes contrary to my desires. . . . I feel that Annapolis is entirely lost to me. I have given up all hope of ever getting there. My hopes and dreams are shattered forever and I may

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as well acknowledge that now as later. I have to laugh at myself for thinking of getting into Annapolis when I don't even seem to possess brains enough to be a simple petty officer in my own company here. It sounds ridiculous to me now. . . .

March 13th, 1914—*Evening.*

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

I received your letter of the 12th to-day and was mighty glad to hear from you. I can hardly see why you never have thought I would succeed in getting into the Academy but I guess it's true. To-day I let go by another chance to get into the signal school for two reasons,—first, because Buck told me the chances of advancement are slow in that line and second, because I don't feel as if I had the brains to get through the signal school. It takes mighty quick eyesight and brain-work to be a signal-boy, and I honestly don't feel capable of either. I feel as if I had lost almost all power of comprehending things quickly and easily like I used to be able to do.

Mr. Pearce talked to me this morning and—well I suppose I have made you worry a good deal about me, dear Mother, and I am mighty, mighty sorry that I have; but please try not to worry about me. I'll try to get along in the service but I get so discouraged sometimes that I have a hard struggle to keep myself in restraint. I'm getting so I don't know what I am doing sometimes. . . .

I will never get over the shock of Val's death,

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Mother. It haunts me again and again. I feel as if he took a big piece of my heart away with him. I never thought before he died that he and I were so much to each other. . . .

Barracks C,
Newport, R. I.
March 23rd, 1914.

We are scheduled to go out on the 31st, a week from next Tuesday (to-morrow), so *if* I pass the exams and get off I shall be in Norristown by noon of the 1st and shall stay with you at least until the following Monday.

I feel as if I was going crazy. I have gotten so I don't give a hang what I do and I suppose before I know it I'll get into some trouble and spoil the whole hash. I feel almost worn out and therefore mighty miserable. This week is dragging along slower than molasses in January.

Mr. Buck said this morning that he had seen my exam papers (the Annapolis ones) and that Mr. Morrison had them and would probably call me up in his office to-day, but thus far I have received no word from him. I don't see why they were sent to the Station authorities here and not direct to me but I'll probably find out to-morrow. I laugh at the fact of my trying to enter the Naval Academy and become a commissioned officer when I am too insignificant here at the Station to even be the lowest of the petty officers. I'm like a ship that is going around in a circle because it has no compass,—lost. . . .

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Please ask Aunt Frances that if I *do* get on to see you both I would be mighty well pleased if she would be so considerate of my having had no real enjoyable feed here that she will make some of her very excellent *cinnamon buns* if it won't be too much trouble to her. . . .

EDMOND.

U. S. Naval Training Station,
Newport, R. I.
April 15th, 1914, P. M. Barracks B.

Last night I sent a hurried postal saying that it had been rumored that war had been declared with Mexico, and I was down on the draft which was to go out to-day. Well my name was down and a lot of us got ready last night but to-day a bunch of us were left off the draft which leaves on the *Tacoma* for Mexican waters early to-morrow, and it may be a number of weeks before we go out and we may get sent off next week.

It seemed so good to have gotten back here and the same day to hear that we were to be hurriedly sent off to Mexico that it is quite a disappointment not to be going with the ones who seem to be so lucky; but we all are hoping to get away soon and see real service and perhaps a touch of fighting "with the greasers."

On board the U. S. S. *Georgia*.
April 23rd, 1914. Noon.

We sail for Mexico at 4 this P. M. No stops at

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Albert Rivers Genet, Jr.; Gilbert Rodman Fox Genet; Edmond Charles Clinton Genet.

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all anywhere are the orders. Will probably get there this time next week.

We are the 2nd vessel of the 3rd division of the Atlantic Fleet.

Watch the papers for reports of us.

Pray for us, dear little Mother, and may God keep you well and strong while I am away. Rivers may have to go out also. I send him a postal with this mail. Please let Rod. know as I have no time to do so.

Good-by, little Mother, and please don't worry about my safety too much. If I have to be killed I am not at all afraid of it. I'm in to do my duty even if it does cost me my life.

Lots and lots of love to you and Aunt F. and may God watch over us all.

Saturday afternoon, April 25th, 1914.
On board the U. S. S. *Georgia*.

Yesterday the landing-forces were organized and my name was among those of the 6-inch-gun crews who are to remain aboard and cover those on shore, but several—and it surprises me that any could—asked to be allowed to stay aboard and the officer in charge of the landing-force asked if there were any who would volunteer to go in their places. I was the first to step forward and after some hard and earnest talking and assuring that I could use a rifle I was put down in the landing-force, which makes me feel mighty pleased. It is the *most* dangerous position, but I would rather step forward

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and volunteer, as I did, to give my services and my life if needs be, to go into the most danger than to stay aboard as if I were afraid to fight. It may be, dear little Mother, that I may never return alive to the ship, but I shall die fighting for the country I love and have given myself to serve and I honestly say that I am going in to fight with no fear of death. Why should I? It would do me no good to be afraid and it surely will do me a lot of harm.

It may be that we won't land but from all reports I think we shall. We have to carry a heavy knapsack and gun, food and clothing, a poncho and ammunition, so you see we shall each have a heavy load to fight with.

We are now about off N. Carolina and haven't stopped anywhere. We haven't even been in sight of land. It certainly seems good to be on a man-of-war, and especially to be really bound for real war. The routine is not very hard here and I think I shall be able to get along very smoothly. . . .

We'll get to Vera Cruz about Saturday next I should judge and I'll mail another letter to you then. . . .

We were given a great send-off at Boston. Big crowds lined the docks and cheered and whistles blew constantly. We were the last ship to go out and so we got the best send-off.

The *Virginia* is plodding along just ahead of us.

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U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Vera Cruz, Mexico.
May 6th, 1914.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

We arrived here on the morning of the 1st and have been anchored off the City ever since simply waiting. The artillery section of the landing-force has been ashore twice but they have come back both times the day they landed and have done no fighting.

To-day over three hundred regulation khaki suits were brought on board and are to be distributed among the landing-force. This looks as if fighting were really expected and possibly we may get it before very long. Reports state that the Mexicans are only waiting for reinforcements before they attempt to retake Vera Cruz. If that *is* the case we'll have all the fighting we can do.

Last Sunday afternoon the battleship *Montana* left here for N. Y. with the remains of 14 sailors and 3 marines who were killed in the fighting here. It was a mighty impressive sight to see her steam slowly out between the war-ships here with all the ensigns at half-mast, the bands playing the funeral march and all the crews standing along the decks of their ships, facing her, with bared heads. If anything serious occurs here how many of us will be carried back the same way?

This is pay-day so I shall have to stop for a while to work. . . . Last week I was incidentally asked by a chief yeoman on board if I would like a posi-

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tion in the Pay Office. I told him I would and, at his direction, went up to the Pay Master and asked for the position. I was detailed last Saturday. The position is that of striker for yeoman. The fellow whose place I am filling is to be advanced to 3rd-class yeoman so you see what it leads up to. It can further lead up to 1st-class yeoman, chief yeoman and perhaps to Pay Master whose pay is $264 per month with expenses. A pretty good chance, isn't it? I was mighty lucky to get it. As soon as the fellow I spoke of is rated I get $5 extra added to my $21 per. The work is pleasant and a great deal nicer than if I were working on the decks. That's why I have to work now to help pay off the men. . . .

It is as hot as blazes down here though the weather has been just fine. We all work in our undershirts in the office. . . .

May 30th, 1914.

Am using the pen. It is O. K. and I'm mighty glad to have one again. Also thank you for the magazines. They are just the right ones and I'll get a lot of pleasure out of them in my spare time and I'll hand them around as well so they will give others pleasure also. . . .

I guess the war trouble is about over so guess no others *will* be ordered down here. Dr. MacC. speaks of the funeral in N. Y. of those sailors & marines. He says, "Dr. Squires & myself went down Br'dway and stood on the curb. I wouldn't

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have missed paying that last honor for anything. It was all I could do just now." He also says, "Edmond, you could have heard a pin drop when the bodies passed, and every hat was off and women, and men too, bowed their heads." It certainly must have been impressive. Do you know, Mother, one almost wishes he too could be honored that way?

I had my feet on real Mexican soil for the first time this P. M. Went ashore to see a baseball game between the *Georgia's* team and that of the 28th Inft. I hope to get shore liberty this coming week so I'll have a good chance to see Vera Cruz. It surely is a picturesque city,—white plaster houses, an old white-walled fort in front and the high, snow-capped, volcanic mountains behind to set it off. In the early mornings when the sun is just coming up it presents the most beautiful piece of scenery I have ever seen. The green of the near-by hills is so vivid, the water so blue and sparkling, the town so white and old-looking with its towers and old fort and the high gray mountains almost fifty miles in the background, together with the grim gray battleships anchored in the foreground, present a picture in colors and scenery that would give pleasure to an artist to place on canvas. I never expected it to be such a beautiful place. . . .

I doubt if any more serious trouble will ensue between the U. S. and Huerta. They seem to be coming to terms now. To me it is all folly—this peacemaking with a miserable cutthroat. . . .

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July 11, 1914.

It has been rather misty around the mountains of late so I haven't had a glimpse of Orizaba with its snow-capped peak for some time. Just these days it is full moon and it sure is beautiful here in the evenings in the moonlight. Almost every night we have motion pictures to look at and they help to agreeably and enjoyably pass away the evenings before tattoo. They show some pretty good films too.

Second-class mail just brought in. The magazines are here from you and many, many thanks to you and Rivers for being so good to your sailor-son.

A small and yet what might have been a big incident occurred on the American line, which radiates about three miles around Vera Cruz, the other day. It seems that at a certain point the Mexican troops are stationed just a short distance from our line. A captain of a troop of U. S. soldiers unwisely led (perhaps it was unsuspectingly) his men across the line and was stopped by a Mexican colonel with a squad of his men who advanced with a flag of truce when he saw the Americans cross the line. The colonel demanded to know why the Americans had overstepped the limit of the American line. In reply the captain of our force said that he was making maps and rather curtly asked the Mexican what he intended to do about it. He replied that if the Americans did not retreat to their line he would order his force to attack them. This would

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very likely have resulted in the complete annihilation of our force as they were outnumbered by the Mexicans and they had a great deal better position. As it was, however, the captain wisely retreated and that ended the incident but it shows what might possibly happen at any time. Things *are* rather unbalanced. If things did come to a climax it would be a thousand times better than this suspense.

I must close now and get down below to do some strenuous scrubbing. Scrubbing dirty clothes on Sat. afternoon wouldn't appeal to me at all on the outside but in the Navy—well it has to be done so one gets used to it and then it isn't really hard work anyway. I know one thing, though, and that is that when I get a wife she can darn my clothes but she'll never wash them if I can prevent it. I wonder when I *will* get married. Not until my income is pretty nigh on to $200 or $250 a month anyway.

July 25th, 1914.

What do you think came in the mail this morning? Something mighty acceptable,—a long letter from ——. She wrote it in gay Paris on the 3rd and 4th of July. She says that when they started across she was just lingering between life and death and the only hope they had was that the sea air would either help her or kill her. It helped her and when she wrote the letter she was very much better and stronger only full of medicine. Her ac-

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counts of some people she has seen in Paris are great. She's having one good time I guess. . . .

Ma, I've been a bad kid. Last Friday (week) I lost my miserable temper while talking to one of the Chief Master-at-Arms and in consequence I spent all of last Saturday in the ship's "pie-house" munching angel-cake and white wine (bread & water). Some real sailor your noble son is now. You know one isn't really a real sailor until he has "done time" in the sweat-house so I've done time and am a real sailor. I don't care to do any more "time" though, thank you, if I can help it.

I suppose you know the latest dope about the Mexican situation. Huerta has "beat it" and now *peace*, gentle, noble peace, is hanging by a very thin thread. War, bitter, bitter war may still trouble the hearts and pockets of our glorious countrymen. We'll not be North until Oct. or Nov. or Dec. or Jan. or Goodness knows when anyway. That's the most explicit dope I can deal out just now. "Where there's life, there's hope" but there is very little "life" down here so I guess there is very little "hope" either. . . .

U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Passage Vera Cruz, Mexico, to Port au Prince,
Hayti.
August 7th, 1914.

Unless you have seen in the papers that the *Georgia* has left Vera Cruz for Port au Prince, Hayti, you are doubtless surprised to know that fact from

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this letter. It was a quick leave-taking of Mexico, because the sailing orders were not received until Friday afternoon, the 31st, and we had to coal all of Saturday, taking on 1,200 tons, and a lot of commissary and ship's stores besides before we could leave, which was about 9.30 P. M. Saturday, the 1st. It made just exactly three months that we were at Vera Cruz.

To-morrow, probably in the morning, we shall get to Port au Prince. We are quite near the Cuban coast now. This morning we passed Santiago. Until now I did not realize that Cuba was so mountainous.

The weather has been great all the way, although a *trifle* rough. Every minute or so a wave will break over our bow. I managed to get a letter off to Rod. last Sat. before we left but, as I was very very busy all Friday in taking care of clothing stores which were brought on board for us then and coaling ship, etc., all Saturday I could get in no time to drop you or Rivers any word of the sudden change. This will leave for the States on the *Connecticut*, which we are to relieve, to-morrow.

There is, as I suppose you already know from the papers, some trouble going on in Hayti, and I believe part of the crew are to land and take up camping quarters when we arrive. Mr. Coontz, our captain, was naval governor of Guam when we had military control of that island, so I presume that is the principal reason why the *Georgia* was ordered to go there, so that if the U. S. had to

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forcibly interfere with the present situation in Hayti, Coontz might be put in charge on account of his experience as governor of Guam.

The present situation in Europe certainly looks pretty serious, doesn't it? With England, Russia, and France against Germany, Austria, and perhaps Italy, there surely will be a mighty big war and a big change in the geography of Europe when it finally ends.

Do you know anything about ——? I had a postal from her in last Saturday's mail, but when she wrote that the war was unknown. Now I guess American tourists are making hurried tracks for home, so I wonder if she and her aunt have returned also. I have a letter I shall mail to her, but I hardly know where to send it—France or the States.

I understood, when we left, that all the ships at Vera Cruz except the *Delaware* and *Kansas* were to return to the States this week. I wish we would be ordered to go to Europe soon. I'd like a mighty lot to get over there while the excitement lasts. *Three* wars in *one* cruise! That would be going some—Mexican, Haytian, and International European War! I guess the last named is the only really serious one, and even that *may* not be very serious, although it doesn't look that way just at present.

U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Port au Prince, Hayti.
August 20th, 1914. *Evening.*

Mail leaves for the United States of America to-

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morrow on the collier *Cæsar*, and I am, therefore, heroically endeavoring to write this epistle so it may leave then. We have been coaling ship all day—started at 5 this morning, and I feel pretty tired.

Have been ashore twice to ball-games which the different divisions of the ship have been having among themselves. Yesterday was the second of those two times and I sure did enjoy it immensely.

The natives are a mixture of French and negro blood and talk a dialect most of which is of French. They are a treacherous lot and are easily excited and aroused. The majority of them carry knives, short swords, or daggers concealed in their sleeves or jackets. The first time I was ashore I bought a broad-bladed short sword in a neat case. It makes a good trophy.

The scenery here is quite picturesque. The harbor is almost like a basin (here is an outline of it). Facing the city from the ship—on the right are very high mountains, and on the left is another range—not quite as high, but which in their rock formation remind me very much of pictures I have seen of the Bad Lands in the U. S. or the Colorado or Arizona ranges—especially when the rays of the setting sun strike them. Their colors are beautiful. The city is on a gentle slope and to its right is a grassy plain which stretches across a valley to the opposite range. The large island at the entrance encloses the harbor a great deal, which gives it the basin idea of which I spoke before. I am enclosing

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a couple of postals—one of the inside of the big cathedral which is the most prominent edifice here and which is mighty pretty inside, and one of the English church, Saint Anne. I haven't seen the latter. Notice the high range behind Saint Anne. I mention that fact on the back of that card. The baseball park is almost at the base of the range, and one has to be on the park grounds and look up at the mountains to really realize their height and what a climb it would be to attain their summit. The sides are very rugged—covered largely with small hillocks and gullies. I think it is a volcanic formation to some extent—probably very old. It looks as if lava formation was there.

It rains here just once every 24 hours and that is between 5 and 7 every afternoon—usually about sunset—a short shower or a thunder-storm.

We arrived here early on the morning of the 8th, relieving the *Connecticut*, which left soon after. The scout *Sacramento* is here also. There is some talk that we may go soon to Porta Plata, which is on the northern coast of Santo Domingo. I can't say anything definite about that though. I have better news which I really hope and pray *is* to be so. That is that we are to be in Philly. for two weeks about the middle of Oct. to attend some sort of a fleet review there. I do hope so because that will give me a fine chance to be with you, dear Mother. . . .

The *Virginia* left Guantanamo, Cuba, the day before yesterday for Vera Cruz. There is a good

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deal of questioning whether we will not get the same destination soon also. We may even be sent to guard the Canal—there has been some indefinite talk about that. The most hopeful dope is that the *Georgia's* annual repair period commences the middle of October and we all hope that we will land in the States for then as usual. No definite news about future manœuvres have been received at all yet.

Next Monday is Labor Day and we are going to have some races and I guess a baseball game. When I look back on Labor Day of last year when I was in Easton and had dear old Val out with me it seems ages ago and just yesterday—both at once. It's going on to a year since he died now, Mother, and I feel just as badly over it now as I did the day he died—worse too because I've missed him so much ever since.

Mother dear, how would you like me to go through West Point?

September 14th, 1914.

Your letters reached me on Saturday. . . .

We get war-bulletins practically every day straight from France, so in that way we are pretty able to follow the different moves the conflict is taking. I feel sure that the Germans will never take Paris. I've a lot of faith in the French tactics and in the French aviation corps, which certainly has lots of power and opportunity to do some mighty effective work against the German invaders.

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The Allies are holding pretty strong, and it will certainly surprise me if the Kaiser's troops are successful very much longer.

I told —— in my letter that I really thought it a very unfair play on her part:—I went off to war in Mexico and she for a pleasure-trip to Europe, and after all I found no fighting at all, while she landed right into a big European war and very likely has tasted of more war than I will in my whole naval career. I'm jealous! . . .

The *Virginia* only came as far as Guantanamo, Cuba, and a little over a week ago she was ordered to return to Vera Cruz on account of the trouble Carranza has been making against the Americans there of late.

When we shall be back I cannot say definitely now. Many think we shall have target practice at Hampton Roads by the middle of October, and then go up to Boston for repairs, but that is very uncertain. . . .

Yes, dear Mother, enlisted men who have had at least one year's service and are of age to enter Annapolis may take the competitive exams held each August, and the 15 highest can take the following entrance exams and if successful can enter the Academy. I would have tried this Aug. but I had not had 12 months' service so could not do so. I am studying to take next year's exams, but I am (and Rivers also) endeavoring to somehow get an outside appointment, if possible, for next Spring's entrance exams.

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U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Southern Drill Grounds.
October 17th, 1914.

We arrived at Hampton Roads last Friday (week), coaled and remained there until Sunday when we left for the outside on the grounds here. All this week has been devoted to torpedo firing and yesterday and to-day we have been firing the different batteries. To-night we are to have 3″ night target practice. I have to record the ranges for the port 3″ guns. While the other batteries are firing (the 6″, 8″ and 12″) I am away down in the "plotting-room" or "substation" where the officers plot out the ranges, etc. We don't get very much of the sound or recoil down there. A comparatively light concussion is felt when the 12″ are fired but nothing of any account.

Target practice will be over to-morrow, providing the weather is fair enough and then we are to fire a few torpedoes. After that is over we go into the Roads and take on a small amount of experimental coal (some new kind which the government wants us to test) and then proceed to Boston at top speed to test the new coal. We'll make between 17 and 19 knots—a pretty good speed for this ship.

As soon as we get to Boston, which I expect will be next Wednesday or Thursday (21st or 22nd) I am down for a five-day furlough. The very first train I can get will carry me to New York with one glad heart stowed away under my ribs. . . .

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October 19th, 1914.

Though this target practice has been almost unbearably slow it has proved a big success for the *Georgia*. This morning when we finished up with the main battery, the 8 and 12 inch guns, we scored a very large percentage of hits. The Star'd Waist 8″ Turret scored 12 hits out of 12 shots. Surely no nation can beat the U. S. in heavy gun firing. I'll leave the interesting things I can tell you about the firing until I see you too.

Please bake a cake for me—one of the old-home kind with chocolate. I can taste it now and, believe your *tarry* son, my mouth just waters for it. . . .

Navy Yard, Charlestown, Mass.
November 2nd, 1914.

. . . . . .

Mr. Pearce came over to see me Wednesday and we had quite a talk together. He says that another examination will be held for enlisted men some time early in 1915 for another 15 to try the April entrance exams, and those passing will go in in June. He advises me to try for that but, Mother dear, I don't see how I can bone up by then enough to try. I've gotten so disgusted with it all that I don't know what to do.

With war threatening with either Turkey or Japan or both one can't tell where he is going to be or what will be done next. We coal to-morrow and leave between the 6th and 8th for Hampton Rds.

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It looks very likely to me that we shall be drawn into this world conflict sooner or later. I've still got some hopes of dying for my country, Mother.

. . . . . .

Write often, dear Mother, and try to make the best of present conditions. We all hope for a better and brighter future. I wonder how long one would last in this world if he had no hope? Not a great while.

. . . . . .

U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Hampton Roads, Va.
November 14th, 1914.
Afternoon late.

We came into the Roads just this afternoon and, I believe, will remain here until we go out to the Drill Grounds again next Wednesday with the entire lot of ships and torpedo-destroyers which are collected here now ready for the coming fleet manœuvres. There is quite a big bunch of the vessels of the Fleet assembled here off Old Point Comfort and it makes quite an impressive sight.

Just as soon as the Fleet target practice is completed we go straight back to Boston, and it is expected we'll be there by the 25th or thereabouts. The first furlough party is expected to leave about the 27th and there are to be three parties during the two and a half months repair period—each to have twenty-six days' leave. If I can possibly get

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the 2nd party which begins about Dec. 21st and includes Xmas in it I am going to do it.

. . . . . .

It's just one year ago to-day that dear Val. died, Mother. How I wish he was still alive and well! I wonder often if I will ever get another such chum again—one I can really call a chum such as Val was?

"O thou child of many prayers!
Life hath quicksands—Life hath snares!
Care and age (and death) come unawares!"

How true that little epigram seems to me now, dear Mother. See how quickly death is coming to thousands engaged in the present European war. . . .

U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Drill Ground.
Nov. 23rd, 1914.

Your letter of the 19th reached me the day before yesterday. The cruiser *Yankton* brings mail out to the fleet practically every afternoon and takes the outgoing mail back with her to the Roads.

Up to Saturday last week was very rainy and the target practice was delayed. On Saturday the 2nd Division fired and yesterday we were all prepared to do so early in the morning, but the rays of the sun proved so strong that they created a haze or mist on the water and the targets could not be discerned at the required fifteen or more

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thousand yards which is the minimum range used in this kind of fleet target practice. It is practically the same range that would separate two fleets in actual engagements in modern warfare. Five or eight miles would seem to be quite a long range for battle but it sure isn't in sea-fights of to-day. Yesterday they used to grapple alongside and board the enemy's ship with small arms. To-day they bombard each other at a distance of from four to twelve miles. To-morrow they will probably be fighting entirely with torpedo-boats and submarines. Such is the evolution of naval warfare.

Posted up on the Crew's bulletin-board is a notice that the entire Atlantic Fleet is to be in readiness by the last of February or March first to assemble in the Roads and take the Canal-Pacific trip to the Exposition. The *Georgia* is not to be a Pacific ship. We'll take the trip, see the Exposition, but will return about September and be put in reserve, as a reserve ship to the Atlantic Fleet, in the Back Channel of the Philly. Navy Yard. That is the very latest and best dope I can give you, Mother. If I stay in through next year it sounds mighty fine to me.

I have started in to study again for the exams for the Academy next Spring and while we are in the Yard I am thinking very seriously of going to night-school three times a week. It will do me no harm to do so even if, after all, I should buy out later or not take the exams for some other reason. There is one other young fellow on board, an elec-

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trician, who is thinking of trying for the Academy, and we may study on board together. If possible we are going to try to get one of the officers to help us.

U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Hampton Roads, Va.
November 29th, 1914.

I'm looking forward to being down at the Shattamuc a few times while I am in Ossining so that I can keep up the beloved acquaintanceship with the piano.

I've received permission from the Executive Officer to attend night-school Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights of each week while the ship is in Boston, so I hope to make some progress in Geometry and Algebra, the subjects I shall take there. The school will close on December fourteenth, I understand, so I won't have but about a week after arrival at Boston, but it will reopen after the holidays about January fifth and when I return from my leave I can start in again and keep on until we leave about the fifteenth of February.

Although I had hoped very much to be able to be with you and Aunt Frances on Christmas Day and help you eat your Christmas dinner, I am about positive, dear Mother, that I shall have to enjoy that day as best I can aboard ship or in Boston and wait until New Year's Day to be with you. If possible I am going to get to Boston on Christmas morning and go to Church there and take Holy Communion.

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The *Georgia* has proven to be one of Uncle Sam's best and most efficient ships this year. We were first in the preliminary target practice, only the *North Dakota* excelled us in the number of hits scored. Yesterday the Commander read off to us a letter of commendation from Rear Admiral Beatty, our Divisional Commander, praising the *Georgia* for her marked efficiency in the matter of sending and receiving signals during battle manœuvres. The *Georgia* in other years has been rather a tail-end ship but this year has proved her mettle and we all feel mighty proud of ourselves and our ship.

What did you do on Thanksgiving Day? Were you invited out to dinner? We are to have our Thanksgiving dinner to-morrow noon. It was to be served to-day but the Starboard watch is away on liberty and so it will be served to-morrow, so that all may enjoy it. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and the Fourth of July are the Navy feeding days.

With a great deal of love.

U. S. S. *Georgia*,
Navy Yard, Charlestown, Mass.
December 14th, 1914.

Yesterday I went to 10 o'clock Communion at St. Paul's Cathedral, the one I went to before, and again to the regular 11 o'clock service. The sermon was a fine one—relating to the present war and the relation of American Christians to it.

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The choir sang one of the most beautiful hymns during the offering I have ever heard. The choir is entirely male and one man with a wonderful baritone voice sang and the choir sang each alternate verse. The name of the hymn was "What of the Night?"

. . . . . .

December 15th, 1914.

This morning a request which I handed into the Executive's office for a four-day extension of the six days due me to commence at noon on the 29th was O.K'ed. by him, so that now I have ten days' leave coming which extends from the above-mentioned date to noon on the 8th of Jan. . . . Another little plan I have doped out is as follows: Wednesday afternoons are open on all U. S. men-of-war for visitors. (Do you grasp what the dope is?) You and Aunt F. and any or all of the Supplees who can, meet me in Philly. when I get there about noon on the 30th, and we can go down to the Navy Yard and I'll take you over one of *my* ships. You see now why I want to get off on the 29th so I can be there by noon of the 30th? . . .

The atmosphere here is decidedly chilly but I've gotten so hardened and such a tough "tar" that I'm going around with a summer undershirt, a light blue jumper and wide-open neck and bare arms and don't feel it at all. In fact I feel mighty good and healthy. I'd much rather have this climate than the miserable heat of Vera Cruz or Hayti.

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Athens Hotel, New York.
Thursday afternoon,
January 14th, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Arrived all right at noon, and have just come back from down-town where I have had my passport *viséed* by the French Consul and purchased my transportation to Havre, France, via S. S. *Rochambeau*, which sails Monday at 3 P. M.

Try not to feel too badly over my going. God is going to take care of me, dear patient Mother. I am not afraid of death and I have always trusted in God to guide me and I always will. I know I am the black sheep of the family—a wanderer, but somehow I'll get through.

I never expect to come back—death seems nearer to me than any possible chances of going through the horrible ghastly conflict which is carousing over Europe without meeting death. I do not fear when I think of it, Mother. I can give my life just as freely for the Tricolor as I can for Old Glory.

Will you look among your possessions and see if you have a small cross which I can put on a cord and wear around my neck? I don't want the one you always wear. It is too expensive. I thought possibly you had another which was less expensive. You will get this to-morrow, I hope, and if you send a letter and the cross, if you have one, either to-morrow or Saturday it ought to reach me here Monday morning anyway. I shall board the vessel about 1.30 Monday afternoon.

. . . . . .

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God bless and keep you well and safe, dear Mother, and ask Him to keep safe and give strength to

Your ever loving son,
EDMOND.

Monday morning, Jan. 18th, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

I received your letter last Saturday with the cross and thank you ever and ever so much for it. It is just what I wanted and a very good size. Your letter of the 16th came this morning with the prayer. It is a mighty good one and I will keep it always with me, dear Mother.

If you looked at the shipping news yesterday you will know that the *Rochambeau's* sailing has been postponed from to-day until Wednesday, the 20th, at 3 P. M., so that I have two days more to wait around. It seems as if there were no end of delays.

I will do what I can to arrange so you will know if I lose my life or anything else happens to me in the war, dear Mother. I don't want to advertise myself too much though.

I thank God, Mother, that I do not have to be running away from my own dear family. Most boys have to go through that experience. It makes it so much easier when I know that there is a home with you always. God bless you, dear Mother, and keep you happy and give you many, many years more in which to be happy and well. God will take care of me. I will always trust in Him

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to give me strength to fight my battles and to give me success, and if it so pleases Him to take me I want you to know that I will go willingly and with a glad heart.

I will write another letter before the vessel sails on Wednesday.

January 20th, 1915.

Your letter was just handed me and this must be my last to you for some time at least.

I have written to a few of the old friends, dear Mother. . . .

I had noticed before the words for the 18th. Surely will I try to follow them, especially the latter, "Duty must be done."

The cross is just the right size and I am glad you did not get a larger one. I have the little book of the New Testament which Mr. Pearce gave me and perhaps, dear Mother, out on the battle-field I may be able to say a prayer for some fallen comrade. I hope God will give me strength to help those who are fallen, be they friends or enemies.

God will take care of me, Mother. I trust in Him with all my heart and soul. May He keep you well and safe and happy and guide me back to you some day. I am not afraid if He sees fit to take me. I am His and He will do with me as He sees fit.

Good-by, my own dear Mother, and God bless and keep you in His perfect care.

Always your loving EDMOND.

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Athens Hotel, New York.
Wednesday, January 20th, 1915.

MY DEAR JEANNETTE,

Possibly you thought that I was not very much in earnest when I told you that you would very likely never see me again,—that I was not going to return to Boston. It is true. I sail this afternoon on the S. S. *Rochambeau* for France to throw away my life, if need be, in the war. I intend to join the French forces as soon as possible after reaching Paris, which will be about the twenty-seventh of this month.

There appear to be very, very few possibilities of my escaping through the conflict alive. It looks to be a long one and sooner or later I expect to have to give up my life on the battle-field. I care nothing about that. Death to me is but the beginning of another life—better and sweeter. I do not fear it.

If I ever do return to this land of great possibilities I want to find you the biggest success the stage-world has ever had. You can do it, and in the right way too. The best of luck and success to you, dear Star.

Good-by to you all. You may be sure that I shall never forget you even while I may be prodding Germans with my bayonet or being stuck myself.

Your devoted friend,

EDMOND.

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Athens Hotel,
New York.
January 20th, 1915.

MY DEAR BILL,

This is farewell perhaps for the last time. I sail for France this afternoon on the S. S. *Rochambeau*. I am going to take my chances in the great war with the French. I hardly expect to live through it but that matters little to me.

Good-by and the best of luck to you all, dear old Pal. I'm a queer sort I know but I'm not so queer that I shall ever forget my old boyhood friends and comrades. I was born to be a wanderer.

Success to you all and farewell.

Your old chum,
MONK.

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FRANCE

IN THE FOREIGN LEGION

1915–1916

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À Bord de *Rochambeau.*
28th January, 1915.

My darling little Mother,

We are not yet in Havre but I will take this time to tell you something of the voyage across and finish up to-morrow before leaving the ship. We are due off Havre to-night but will not dock until early to-morrow morning. It is hoped it will be in time for us to catch an express-train which leaves there for Paris about eight o'clock.

We entered the Channel to-day.

We did not pull out until 5.20 instead of 3. Darkness set in almost as soon as we got out into the North River and I had a fine view of the N. Y. sky-line lighted up and the statue of Liberty as we steamed down the Bay.

The first two days were fine—weather bright and clear and the sea comparatively calm. Since Sunday, however, the weather has been very rough and stormy with the exception of yesterday, when the sea was the only thing which was in any way uncomfortable. Tuesday and Wednesday the waves were from 18 to 25 feet high and we rolled about like a cork. I have not been absolutely seasick but have felt anything but good and consequently the trip has not been as pleasant as it might have otherwise been.

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The crowd on board is a very sociable one and I have made a few friends.

Yesterday I had my money changed into French, —5 francs to the dollar. One franc is really equal to about $.195 U. S. currency. The centimes (100 to the franc) are the most confusing to me, but I guess I'll get accustomed to it.

This letter I will mail on board before disembarking to-morrow morning, and can use U. S. postage on it, as it goes back on the ship of this line which is due to sail for N. Y. on Saturday. I will write another letter as soon as I can after reaching Paris.

We passed very few vessels on the way over. To-day we have passed a few in the Channel, but thus far have seen no war-ships. I hope we *don't* see any *German* ones. The Channel is mined a good deal and I believe there will be a pilot on board before we get near the mouth of the Seine to take us into port.

Since Tuesday we have encountered quite a number of short snow-flurries and the snow was as hard as hail. To-day is rather a rainy-looking one. At meals I have sat with three men. One is an amusing elderly character from Maine—in the shoe and leather business, another is a pleasant middle-aged man from the West (I don't know his business but believe it is jewelry he is interested in) and the third is a very sociable Briton—more French than Briton, who is a chemist and civil engineer and is returning to France to join the army like a great many other American-French. He lives near N. Y.

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He has been the interpreter for the three of us and is very interesting with his stories of Paris and descriptions of France. He is very well educated and speaks 7 different languages. The four of us have gotten along mighty well together.

There are more women and young ladies on board than I expected to find. I have played the piano for them at odd times, but the instrument is a poor one and hard to play on with any degree of feeling. Altogether the passengers form a pleasant lot.

It is now about 5.30 and we are not yet in sight of land. It may possibly be quite late to-night before we come near Havre.

Please, please don't worry about me, dear Mother. I will get along somehow and with God's help will come out near the top some time. I've got to take things as they come to me now and work out the best plan I can. This war will end some day and when it does there will be lots of openings and opportunities in France. The early bird always catches the worm you know and I'm over here to be the early bird.

"So long Thy power has blest me, sure it still will lead me on."

I have to smile when I think of myself going to Europe with one light suitcase—on my nerve. Most people lug along a couple of dozen trunks and a lot of other things and then only stay two or three months. I surely am going "on my nerve." I guess I have plenty of that.

I rather believe all the folks were very much

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surprised when they received my letters of farewell.

It is now near eleven o'clock. I am going to turn in shortly but first want to let you know that I expect to have a definite place to go to at first in Paris. The three gentlemen whom I have before spoken of (my dinner friends) and I have been having a sociable chat all evening in the smoking-room and M. Guerquin, the Frenchman who is going to join the troops is going to let me go with him to a small hotel which he is in the habit of going to when in Paris and where it is cheap but comfortable. He is an extremely pleasant man and I feel that I am in luck to have him take enough interest in me to look after me and help get fixed in Paris. I have not yet told him of my intentions to try to join the troops myself but intend to before next Monday. There is a possible chance that he may be able to help me that way also. I have no fear that I will have much trouble in getting along, dear Mother, and will let you know as often as possible how I am and what I am doing. I will write more in the morning.

Morning 1/29/15.

It is about 8 and I am all packed and prepared to disembark when we get in. That will not be until about 10 o'clock. Will probably catch the 11 o'clock train to Paris. I got up early this morning thinking we would be in by now but the vessel has been delayed somewhat. . . .

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Most people go to America to win their fortune. I am going to Europe and win it I will if there is such a feat possible—God helping me.

With love to you and all.

Cie P. L. M. Buffet de Paris.
3rd February, 1915.
Evening—8.30.

MY DARLING LITTLE MOTHER,

This afternoon I enlisted in the "Légion Étrangère" of the French army for the war. I am on my way to Lyons, where I will be for from 6 weeks to perhaps three months drilling and learning French war tactics, etc., before being sent to the front to display my powers and *nerve* before the Germans. I wrote Rivers a letter about noon to-day at the hotel where I have been staying, the Hôtel de Moscou, 10 Cité Bergère.

You probably know all about the cablegrams Rivers has been sending me to come back and the two I sent to him. I am pretty much in the dark about exactly why he has been sending for me. I surely wouldn't have come over here just to give up and return as soon as I arrived. I've displayed nerve enough to quit the service and come here and push my way into the French service and I surely believe I can keep on and get through. I did not find it at all difficult to join. My passport was the only paper I showed and it proved to be the only one required. I needed no birth certificate or consent of parents (being twenty-one, which my pass-

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port showed) nor did I have to show any certificate of morality.

The Légion Êtrangère is a part of the French army founded by Napoleon for all foreigners wishing to serve for France. There are Italians, Americans, English (born in France) and many other nationalities in it—all under one regimental flag but all for the "Tricolor." We are French *soldiers* but not French *citizens*.

This letter will very likely go across on the *Rochambeau* which is due to sail from Havre on Saturday. I hope by next Tuesday you will receive my letter written before I arrived last Friday. The Frenchman of whom I speak in that letter whom I met on board the vessel proved a mighty good and a mighty helpful friend to me. He guided me from Havre to Paris and took me to the Hôtel de Moscou where he always stays when in Paris and showed me different parts of Paris and how to get around and also gave me most of the information I needed to know exactly what to do to enlist. Ralph G. Guerquin is his name and he lives on Long Island about 22 miles from N. Y. He is a mechanical engineer and chemist and a very well-educated gentleman. His English is slightly broken but very good.

I also have quite a good friend in Norman Prince, one of the first Americans to try aviation. He is a rich young fellow—about 25 I should judge, and very quick and sensible. He came over on the *Rochambeau* and is entering the French aviation

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corps. He will have some exciting experiences I feel sure.

I also made friends with a very distinguished American—Mr. Henry J. Furber, Jr., a lawyer of Chicago and Republican candidate of that city for mayor. He is a wonderfully fine and well-educated man—delightful to talk to and a fine friend to have. I consider I have been mighty lucky in my friends, don't you, dear Mother?

Please don't be angry with me, dear Mother, for not returning. I will get along and God is surely with me. I feel it. I'm in this game to win the very best there is in it and some day I'll be back and surprise you all.

Sunday afternoon I found an American Church, the Church of the Holy Trinity, and went to the 5 o'clock service. It was simple but I enjoyed it very very much. Mother, if I am taken in battle and you hear of it, which you will, will you have a little service or something like that and in it sing hymn 621? The choir sang it at the Church Sunday and I think it is beautiful and so fitting for those in this war. I suppose the hymns all have the same numbers in the Episcopal hymnal. 621 is the hymn.

My train leaves for Lyons at 10 o'clock. It is about 9.15 now. I am alone with my papers. My transportation of course is free. Soldiers travel free in the country when they are on duty. I am due at Lyons at 7.38 to-morrow morning but it will probably be later when I get there. Most all trains run late these times.

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I have seen quite a bit of Paris in the short time I have been here and, 'though it is pretty quiet now during the war I have enjoyed myself walking around and seeing all I could. I even visited Notre Dame.

As soon as I can I will write from Lyons and let you know an address so you can write to me. It will cheer me up wonderfully to hear from you and Rivers and Rod and any others who will write.

February 7th, 1915.
Address:—1er, Étrangère, 5e Compagnie,
Dépôt des 2e et 3e régiments de marche,
Lyons, France.
Correspondance Militaire.

This is the first chance I have had to write since I wrote you Wednesday morning, the 3rd, in the station at Paris before taking the train for here. I arrived here about 8 the morning of the 4th, and am in a barracks—really a school now used by the troops for quarters. I hope to be sent out to a camp of the regiment in a week or so which is near here. This is only temporary—until I learn a little about drilling, etc.

Yesterday I was fitted out in my uniform—tight dark-blue jacket, bright-red trousers and cap and light-blue overcoat. When we go out to the front our red trousers will be replaced by blue ones. The red prove to be too good targets for German rifles. I feel rather tight and strange in this garb after wearing the loose sailor uniforms but

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guess I will soon become used to it. To-morrow we are to go out to drill for the first time. There are recruits arriving all the time from Paris. To-day a pleasant young American arrived. He is a doctor by profession and comes from Buffalo. He has been with the Red Cross since October but gave that up to join the troops to fight. Neither of us are very competent with our French and we're mighty glad to have each other's company. There are quite a number who speak English here though and I am getting along fairly well. I find it hard to grasp French—it is spoken so fast by those who know and speak it, I hope I'll get on to it before long. Most people think the war will be brought to an end by next summer and by then I hope to be thoroughly competent in speaking French and, providing I am well and alive, will look up some position either in France, England, or probably the good old United States if I think it will be safe to return there. I am not sure about that, dear Mother, but all that will come later.

I hope it will not be more than a month or six weeks before I will be marching out to the front and join in the real fighting. I did not come over here to lie around a barracks or a recruit camp until the war ends.

I am going to try to write to Rivers before the week is very far advanced and to Rod, also, but send them my address anyway in case you get this before they hear from me so they can both write me long letters as well as yourself. I don't expect

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to get much time to write and my letters will very likely be few and short but the love is there just the same, dear Mother, and I am thinking of you all always. God bless you all. I know I am a mighty wayward son but I can't help it, Mother dear. My heart is mighty big and my love strong and full. Some day I'll be back to prove it to you all. Tell Rivers to explain everything about the *Georgia* affair to me. I am pretty much in the dark about it and want to know what it was all about.

Camp Valbonne, 20th February, 1915.
Premier. Dépôt des 2ème et 3ème régiments de marche, Lyons, France.
Correspondance Militaire.

Just a month ago to-day I left little old New York on the *Rochambeau*. I am now at Camp Valbonne, the training-camp of the Légion Étrangère, just about 25 miles from Lyons. It is at one side of a large flat plain and a fine place for such a camp. This time of the year, though, there is a great deal of rain and the ground therefore is damp & muddy. To-day it is pouring outside. We live in long wooden houses divided into sections of 23 men each and the quarters are fairly comfortable. We sleep on straw mattresses with two good large and warm blankets to keep off the cold. I find sleeping fairly easy and comfortable—far better than it will be when I get out to the front and in the trenches or anywhere on the bare ground. We drill a good deal and march and have target prac-

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tice with the rifles and do everything connected with fighting, even to trench-digging once a week. Last Saturday in Lyons I had my first inoculation for typhoid prevention and there is another this afternoon and for two successive Saturdays also. I am feeling well except for a slight cold. That does not worry me.

Last Wednesday a detachment of us left Lyons and came here and I believe we shall be here until the last of March or the early part of April from present reports. It will be a good time to go out to the front because now is the rainy season and by the time Spring starts the war will pick up in earnest and the real fighting will commence. There are nearly or about 3,000 men here preparing to go out.

You know of the young American doctor I spoke of in my last letter whom I made friends with in Lyons and who is in this regiment? He comes here next Wednesday. We have become mighty good comrades and are hoping to be able to keep together through the war. While I was in Lyons we went about a good deal together. Last Sunday we took a long walk about the outskirts of Lyons and he treated me to a fine dinner in one of the best hotels there in the evening. The following day his wife came on from Paris where she was with him while he was there, and Tuesday evening he sent me down to the hotel to meet and have dinner with her. He was unable to take me on account of guard duty. He is 32 and looks to be 24, and his

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wife is extremely pleasant and ladylike, and I had a very pleasant visit with her. She was doing nurse work in the military hospitals around Paris while Dave was out in one of the hospitals near the front doing surgical work. He surely is a fine fellow. He has done a great deal of hunting and camping up through Canada and is a thorough out-of-doors man. We are both mighty glad we came together and I only hope we *can* keep together.

I am sending all my letters now without stamps because in France all military men can do so with all their mail and I am trusting that the French military stamps will carry any letter through the U. S. mails. They go to England without stamps and, although the U. S. is not one of the Allies I should think that a French military stamp would be accepted there anyway.

I am finding it very difficult to talk and understand French, but am in hopes that I will be able to get on to it before many weeks. Unless I know French I cannot, of course, get any rank in the regiment, so it's up to me to learn the lingo.

There are a few Americans here and quite a number of others who speak English a little. The officers are pretty good—those that are commissioned, but the petty ones are a poor lot. Dave Wheeler and I thought over about changing to the English army (it could be done) but, although one is better treated and better paid and we wouldn't have the language to contend with, we would most

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likely have to go to England to learn drilling and once we got there it might be four or six months before we were sent back to France and to the front. There we would be put in one of the poorest regiments, while now we are in one of France's best and have a better chance to learn French and that is really what I am after. Here, too, we have the opportunity to get to the front within six weeks or so. We decided it was best to stick it out in this army even if we weren't very adept with our French. He can spit it out better than I can but he has a hard time with it too.

The food is pretty good and there is enough of it except meat. I have always been used to a good deal of meat and the two small pieces each day seem hardly sufficient. After I got used to the bread issued I have gotten to rather like it. One can scarcely expect very excellent food in such an army in war times.

God bless you, Mother dear. No boy could ever have a better mother than I have and no son loves his mother more than I do mine.

Camp Valbonne,
February 28, 1915.

Some time this week I am earnestly hoping that quite a bit of mail will arrive from you all. I am becoming mighty anxious to hear from you.

Except for a slight cold I am feeling well and am only fretting for the time to come when I shall get out of here and to the front. We have a good

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many marches here—from four to five every week and plenty of target practice and sham battles. Altogether it is rather enjoyable and interesting. This last week has been quite cold and we had some snow. To-day it looks more like rain by the afternoon.

Last Wednesday Dave Wheeler and three Englishmen arrived from Lyons with the batch of recruits sent that day and they are all in the Fourth Company while I am in the Second. If possible I am going to get in with them. The Fourth is the better company and they all seem to be sure that they will be sent to the front by the 15th of March and those in this company know nothing about going out that soon. Anyway I want to get with Dave and we are hoping it can be arranged this week. The three Englishmen are very pleasant and it will be much nicer if we can all hang together.

There has been talk that the Légion Êtrangère will be sent to help take Constantinople and go off very soon, but most discredit that rumor. The combined French and English fleets are going to seize that city and it would be a mighty interesting and exciting campaign to take part in and I really would not be disappointed if the government sent us there instead of to the German campaign. As long as we get sent out soon it will be all right to me—wherever we go.

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Premier Régiment Étranger, 2ème Compagnie.
Dépôt de la 3ème Compagnie,
Lyons, Rhône, France.
March 18th, 1915.

My dear Rod,

This next Saturday with about 900 others I leave here for the front. It has only been about six weeks since I enlisted and I think I have been very lucky to be going out so soon. I left Camp de La Valbonne last Tuesday. We came here to receive the final fixings to our outfit and the new rifles issued to all preparatory to going to the front. We sure are mighty glad to be going out and I am not the least of the joyful ones.

The days are getting warm and pleasant now and Spring is here all right. On the marches we took while at Valbonne I saw the first flowers of Spring. We are surely going out at a good time and the fighting is beginning to pick up after the winter's trench-work and we all expect to be in some lively times within the coming two months. The war may be over by June or July.

There is one other American fellow with me and I expect we shall meet quite a good many more out at the front in other detachments of the Legion. There sure is some collection of people in this outfit. I think I have met every nationality except Chinese, Indians and Hindus. There are even German Jews in it, and many of them can only speak German. How they get taken in I can't imagine but they are here just the same and most of them are lazy and good-for-nothing. German

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is a harsh enough language to hear but when a Jew speaks it it sure sounds ridiculous.

The knapsack and blanket, etc., we have to carry about on our backs is some big and heavy. Our rifle is all right though. The French use the La Belle, 1886. It has a magazine something like the Winchester—beneath the barrel, and holds 8 shells in the magazine with a cut-off so that the rifle can be fired by single shells injected apart from the magazine. It is not as good or as complete as our new Springfield rifle but it isn't very bad either. The bayonet is long and needle-shaped. The bullet is solid copper and a trifle larger and heavier than the German one. I was able to do some pretty good shooting at the camp so I guess I can hold my own at the front. I'll do my best anyway. It will be kill or be killed and I'm not exactly *willing* to depart from this tranquil (??) life just yet.

Do write to me, Rod., and tell me how you are getting along. Best best luck, dear Brother, and lots of love.

3e Régiment Marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bataillon, 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 115, France.
March 24th, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Last Saturday noon we left Lyons for here—the front. That is as much as I can tell you of my whereabouts from now on except that I am in the north of France. It is strictly against rules to mention either where one is or anything about the fight-

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ing. The Captain has to read all letters sent out and he destroys those which may reveal anything to be kept secret. I am in a small village which is almost on the main line of trenches and only about two miles from the German lines. The reports of the guns on the line are very distinct and were all the twenty-two miles we had to walk yesterday morning from the town where we left the train on Monday. Even during the night I heard an occasional boom although I enjoyed the best sleep I have had since leaving La Valbonne. To go back to where I started—Lyons, a strange thing happened just before I left there on the train. While waiting at the depot I was handed three letters. It sure cheered me up to get them especially at the very time of departure for the front when I had no one to bid good-by to.

The trip up here by train lasted from noon Saturday to early on Monday morning when we arrived at a small town 22 miles southwest of here and slept over that night there in a large barn. Just after we landed there we sighted a German aeroplane high up but it passed westward and out of sight. It was our first taste of war. I have seen three French ones around here since. Guess it won't be long before I'll see aero fights and everything else. To-morrow we go out for five days at the trenches, after that we have five days' work, digging trenches if there are any to be dug. And then five days of complete rest and so on. The danger starts to-morrow.

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All the way on the train we were treated fine. At almost every stop we were served coffee, wine or bouillon and bread, etc., by Red Cross nurses and all that was in addition to the regular rations issued to us. We sang and really had a great time. We changed trains for the north very near Paris, but did not see the city itself. The weather has been fine and I was really surprised to find all along the trip out how beautiful and picturesque the country is.

(The bang-bangs of the guns at the line are very plain here—I hear them now.)

Surely the women of France are doing their share in the war. They all were so nice to us the way out. Every station seems to have two or more of them with things to feed the soldiers as they pass on their way to the front or the wounded as they pass on their way to the hospitals. How many, many of them are facing bullets just to help us when we are wounded! Surely they are to be honored as well as the men who do the actual fighting.

Lydon, my American comrade, was with me all the way from Lyons but he has been placed in some other company here yesterday and possibly one of the 2nd battalion and thus far I have been unable to locate him although he must be around here somewhere. It seems utterly impossible for me to permanently get with any of the comrades I want to. First Wheeler is left at La Valbonne and now Lydon is put in some other company. If we were together and one of us is wounded—or worse—

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the other could let his people know of it and help him in lots of other ways. Such seems to be impossible. There are two or three I have met in the company here who speak English and from them I have learned some of the ins and outs of the fighting and what to do and expect and what not to. Now that the rainy season is pretty well over the trench fighting will not be such a terrible hardship as those who have been here through the winter say it was. One has to keep "below decks" to save his life though and the worst fear is from bombs, etc.

Good-by for this time, darling little Mother. Last night I stopped in the Church which is in the village and asked God to help me to be a man and a Christian—even to my foes and to give me strength and courage to win in this war and come back to do my part to make your lives happy and free from care and trouble. We all believe in God but there are only a few who really are not afraid to show it.

3e Régiment Marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bataillon, 4e Compagnie.
Secteur postal 115, France.
March 26th, 1915.

MY DEAR RIVERS,

You never before received a letter quite like this because it is being written in the very front line of the trenches, with bullets singing and hissing all around, and "Les Allemands" (The Germans) in their trenches not 400 metres away. I am seated in a small "dugout" underneath the outer trench

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wall (where we sleep—three or four, or more, as the size of the place may allow, while we are off duty). There is straw on the ground and it is really quite warm and comfortable, though crowded.

On account of regulations I cannot tell you where on the line I am, and also very little concerning the movements of the troops, etc., but I'll tell as much as I possibly can and you'll have to just imagine the rest.

I left Lyons last Saturday noon and, after leaving the train at a small town, within twenty-two miles of the line, early Monday and staying there over that night, we marched the rest of the distance the following morning to another small hamlet about two miles back of here which is the base of the regiment in these parts.

I have just been outside and watching the French firing at a German aeroplane. Earlier this morning I saw the reverse. One sees the little puffs of white smoke burst out around the plane in the blue of the sky and a second or so later comes the dull boom of the report. Thus far I've seen no aeroplane fights. Even firing one's rifle at the trenches opposite is far, far from being *non*-dangerous. (Just now I hear the incessant crackling of a French mitrailleuse—it sounds like a pack of mandarin firecrackers going off.) In the daytime one cannot put his head up over the top of the trench—he fires through the port-holes and has to do it quick or have his face smashed by the return fire of the watchful enemy. We watch the opposite trenches

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by means of the periscopical glasses through which one can see when below the top of the trench. In the night, firing is a trifle different and in many ways more dangerous. A more careful watch has to be maintained all the time. Then we fire over the top of the trench at any flash of an enemy's rifle and they, of course, do the same. One has to take the 99 chances of being either seen when he puts his head up or of being hit by a stray bullet because the firing never ceases and bullets are hissing and ripping the air all about. Besides all this there are the bombs bursting over the trenches and sending their little missiles of death screaming down at you.

The French "soixante-quinze" (75) is the big gun which is doing the wonderful work. They've got the ranges down so that they can tip the shells right into the German trenches. The French surely are away ahead of the Germans in artillery fire.

Being "under fire" is no joke, dear Brother, even if it is mighty exciting and perhaps interesting as well. We have five days of it at a time, going back to the "base" for five days' rest. I believe we go back on the 29th. Each one of those five days gives one 5 x 24 x 60 x 60 x 1,000 or more chances to be killed in and one isn't sleeping very much of that time either.

Yesterday it was slightly rainy when we reached the trenches but the moon was bright at night and to-day is glorious. It is the dark, cloudy, stormy nights that will be the watchful ones and those who

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have been here through the winter say they have had some mighty hard times with the water almost to their thighs and the bitter cold to contend with besides all the danger.

3e Régiment Marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bat., 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 101, France.
April 5th, 1915.

My dear little Mother,

I was in the trenches from late Thurs. afternoon, March 25th, until late on Sunday the 28th,—only three days so far. The following Tuesday our detachment—3e Régiment Marche—left where it is (or where I am now) and came (most of the way in large auto-buses) south to this postal secteur (101) back of the 2nd line where we are having a rest and may be here a month or six weeks.

Yours and Rivers' letters (the 1st ones written) sure did make me feel pretty downhearted and miserable—I felt like an outcast from everything and everywhere. I have sort of let things settle in my mind since and they don't appear quite as bad. Of course there is the loss of citizenship, but I knew that would result although believed it could be regained easier than Rivers evidently believes. As you say, my record here in France will or may help a good deal and the fact that I was under age. Never mind, dear Mother, things will pass out all right in time. If I could live my life over again it would be very different from what it has

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been. I would never have lost these 2 years out of school, never tried for the Academy at all, and spent all the money for a short college term for mechanical engineering or naval architecture or the like and never have been in the Navy at all; but "it is as it is" so let's look on the brightest side possible and take things as they come. I am glad that those letters came, as now I know exactly how things were in regard to the "G."

You calculated very well because yesterday was Easter and your letter of the 19th with the cards from you and Aunt F. which pleased me very much, Mother dear, came to-day, just the day after Easter.

I slept late yesterday morning—until about ten and spent the day quietly. In the afternoon, Lydon, the young fellow from Boston, and two other English-speaking fellows, one from 'Frisco, played "Bridge." It was a rainy day and it has been rainy since Saturday morning. Last Easter I spent in Ossining on my first leave from the Training Station at Newport. Some difference this one! I thought of my little Mother so far away and wished I could be going to Church with her.

The adjutant of this company was at Valbonne while I was there and came out with us and he has been mighty pleasant and kind to me. He speaks just a little English and the other day he presented me with an English-French translation book. I am progressing with French but very slowly. I am poor at memorizing words.

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Thanks very much for the newspaper clippings—especially the one about the *Georgia*. I am not surprised to find that Mexico is starting to boil over again but was surprised to hear that the *Georgia* was ordered there. Naval plans have all been turned around for this year.

. . . . . .

You recall my speaking of Dave Wheeler being with me at Lyons and La Valbonne. Two weeks ago he came out with a large detachment from the camp and joined us. He is in the 3rd company 1st battalion and so is very near me. We are with each other practically every night and take walks together. Last Sunday evening we went out into the woods beside a pretty stream near here and had a camp-fire, a feast with coffee which I made quite a success in making. He is a thorough out-of-doors fellow, having hunted and hiked through a big part of Canada and besides is a gentleman and a mighty fine fellow. If something happens to me and you don't hear for a long time write to him. If anything happens to me though he'll probably write anyway, the same as I would write to his wife if something happened to him.

We are in a different place from where we were when I last wrote, a very pretty place farther south. We left the other town early last week. We're still on the repose and when we'll get out to the front again is very indefinitely known thus far.

Before I started to write this I had just finished taking a good bath in the cool water of the stream

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which runs through the place and afterward I sewed up the torn places in my blue outer trousers. We no longer wear red trousers but have brown or some other dark-colored ones and blue light overtrousers on top. They are serving out gray overcoats in place of the blue ones also. . . .

Many thanks for the Cross. I've put it in the testament—the Crucifixion—St. John. I always liked St. John more than the other three. . . .

The trees and foliage are fast putting on their green coats and the days are wonderful. I suppose, though, that it is the same back in the States. I've picked violets and buttercups and daisies just as I used to in old Ossining. They are just the same here as there only there it is home—a big, big difference to me. Well, I hope to be there again some day, Mother dear, with you and the boys. I'm not looking for a souvenir "made in Germany." You know what that is.

Your loving son,

EDMOND.

3e Régiment Marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bat., 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 101, France.
May 9th, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

We are all getting rather weary of this repose, especially Dave Wheeler and I and hope it will terminate very shortly. There is a good deal of talk about our being detailed for service in Turkey

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and we sure would be decidedly glad (overjoyed in fact) if such did come about. 'Though it would no doubt be terribly hot there 'twould be seeing more of the world and that sure is better than staying in one country all the time.

In yesterday's paper was the startling news that the *Lusitania* has been torpedoed and sunk by the Germans, with many wealthy and prominent Americans aboard. I have only learned a few facts of the story as I did not get a chance to buy a paper to read it myself but hope to get one of today's which probably will contain a more complete account. It sounds startling enough and if true what action will the States take? I was wondering over that question on guard last night. Surely when the Germans torpedo ships which are unarmed and carrying peaceful and neutral passengers of the U. S. that country ought to do considerable at once.

It is against the rules of international warfare nowadays for troops to attack a defenseless town unoccupied by hostile troops even though it be a hostile town, so surely it is just as much if not more against such rules for a nation to torpedo an unarmed ship of a nation even though it be a ship of the enemy. If all I've heard is true about this affair let's see what our present administration will do now.

Two days ago I received a very nice letter from an old shipmate on the *Georgia* to whom I wrote while in La Valbonne. He is the Canteen Yeoman,

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Joe Tackas by name, from Brooklyn. They are in Vera Cruz, or were when he wrote it on March 29th, doing just what we were doing a year ago—watching, waiting, and enjoying a peaceful time in the meanwhile. From what he says I don't believe any of the friends I made on board think any the less of me for coming over here as I did. Navy men don't look at that particular point in just the same light as do outsiders. They usually "understand." I wish my dear little Mother could understand in just the same way but it is practically impossible for me to explain adequately.

Possibly the *Georgia* will not be present at the mobilization in N. Y. in June if Daniels holds her at Vera Cruz, but most likely the *Virginia* will be present and I sure hope you will get an opportunity to see Mr. Pearce then.

May 25th, 1915.

We have 6 days on the line and 6 days repose alternating with the other Battalion. There wasn't much excitement while we were out on the line. We were shelled a couple of times with no damage resulting. The weather is holding fine and I feel pretty fine. I even think I am gaining in weight. I've already become sunburned quite a bit by working under the hot sun with only my light sleeveless undershirt on above my waist.

Another fellow of my squad, from Colombia, S. America (he speaks English) and myself are sleeping together in a tent out-of-doors and enjoy-

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ing it considerably. It bids fair to be unendurably hot in this country by the time July comes, considering the warmth at the present time.

I am sending you some pretty little "Forget-me-nots" (I think that is what they are) with this letter. Very appropriate, n'est-ce pas? I picked them in a private garden of a château which is near the line and entirely destroyed by former shell-fire. They are the first of that flower I've ever seen growing. There is a very large bed of them there—white and blue ones. I have also seen many patches of "Periwinkle" growing wild in the woods we have passed through. They are the first I've seen since the little bed we had of them at the old home. Dad used to like to wear one or two in his buttonhole for Church, I remember, and I used to watch for them to come out early in the Spring—around Easter-time.

What do you think of me finding 27 four-leaf clovers yesterday morning? I hope they bring me lots of luck. I never could find four-leaf clovers in the States and I'm always picking them up over here. There are wonderful fields of clover here anyway. There is one field near here that is just red with the blossoms now and it sure is pretty. What fine fields for herding cows upon for good milk and yet, on account of the land being needed so much for agricultural purposes, the country people keep their cows in the barns as a general rule practically all the time.

. . . . . .

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Poor —— is mighty hard at work over her studies to graduate in June and go to college next term but she is mighty enthusiastic over me fighting the "disease" (the Germans, including the Kaiser, have been very correctly called that) and she (though it sounds foolish to me) says I am one of the finest men she has ever met, etc., etc., etc.! ! ! Some girl!

She wrote part of her letter in French and I spent an hour or so vainly endeavoring to write *only one* paragraph of my reply in the "blamed lingo." She'll be capable of becoming an expert detective if she can ferret out the mystery of that French which I wrote. It's hard enough to talk but—well, I'd rather not express my ideas about its being *written*.

I do wish you and Rivers could get a little apartment or something like one, as you said. Do try to do it, Mother, as it *will* be much better for you both.

You may, no doubt, be interested to know that I have the "Stars and Stripes" flying at the forward peak of the tent. With me (from the States) on one side and the young fellow from Colombia, S. America, on the other it surely is an *American* camp. N'est-ce pas? We call the part between our blankets the Isthmus of Panama. (The *Canal* is remarkably absent.)

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3ème Régiment marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bat., 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 101, France.
May 26th, 1915.

MY DEAR OLD BILL,

It had been in my mind for the past two weeks to answer your letter of April 6th which came some time ago and now that your mighty acceptable letter of May 9th came yesterday it sure is up to me to make good my intentions and try and *pencil* you a few lines.

You notice the change of number of the postal secteur. Just after I wrote my last letter to you in "115" we left there to go farther south for about 6 weeks of repose. The boys who have had all the hard winter of wet, cold trench fighting were badly in need of it and we all feel better for having had it. It wasn't altogether a complete repose as we had some trench-digging to do on the reserve lines and quite a good deal of drilling and the like but we were at least exempt from actual fighting which thus gave our nerves a rest that way. Nevertheless none of us are sorry to be back on the firing-line again which we have been since the 11th. Of course, I cannot tell where I am but it is much farther south than we were before. By being away down here we are thus missing the severe fighting which is starting to break forth in the North but we all trust we'll see such before many weeks slip by. Now that "Europe's boot" (Italy) is in the war something *ought* to be doin' before long. When the news came the night before last of Italy declaring

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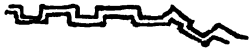
war every one along the line let loose with "Vive l'Italie" and fired their rifles for all they were worth just to make a noise and even the big guns were let loose. 'Twas a thunderous acclamation, you may be sure. The Germans must have thought that the fiends of Hell were out.

We have had quite a bit of artillery action about here and it sure is great to listen to the big guns barking, the hissing of the shells as they rush through the air, and their terrific burst off on the German lines. We've had our share of the shells of the "Bush" too. The other day we were all gathered around the "chow" and—swish-h-h, swish-h-h! two German 77's came over our heads and struck a few hundred metres beyond. We lit out from that particular spot right smartly. About 13 days ago while in a small village near the line we had about 20 shells land in it but no one was hurt very badly nor was there much damage done to the houses.

I am afraid that I cannot tell you very much about the trenches because of regulations which are decidedly strict. They are dug very irregularly to prevent horizontal fire—that is, if the enemy should get horizontally in line with part of a trench they could not sweep but a small part of it with gun-fire. The trenches are usually dug this way:—  or like that in most any irregular line. There are "leaders" all over—trenches for entrance to the main line, etc. A section of trenches might be likened to a cobweb. In

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front of the trenches, between the two lines, are barb-wire entanglements and other impeding obstacles. Some parts of the two lines are as near each other as twenty-five metres (a metre is practically the same distance as a yard) and in other sections they are nearly a kilometre (about 60% of a mile). It all depends on the country and other minor differences. Trenches which have been used for a number of months like most of the main-line ones have here are quite comfortable. There are caves in the sides for sleeping quarters with hay inside and little fireplaces, etc., to add to the comfort. In rainy weather they are not so fine. The water is often over one's ankles and under the water is a half foot or more of slimy mud. You can readily imagine how extremely comfortable such conditions are. On the other hand when it hasn't rained for a few days everything is dry, hot, and decidedly dusty but of course that is much better than mud and dirty water. Life isn't so worse on the line though. It will be the open fighting which will tell on one's strength and nerves.

The other day I read, in an English magazine, that some Lunacy expert stated that there are a number of lunatics who believe themselves to be the Kaiser. They are all wrong but one. N'est-ce pas? I have come to the conclusion that I am fighting a "disease" headed by a lunatic, from all that the Germans have done. The recent *Lusitania* affair was about as fiendish a piece of business as could possibly be and I am waiting to see what

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the U. S. will do in regard to it. I understood yesterday that the Kaiser had not yet sent his reply to the President. There sure must have been some excitement in N. Y. and in fact everywhere in the States when the news of the disaster was rec'd. What next will the "disease" do? ! ! !

3e Régiment marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bat., 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 101, France.
June 1st, 1915.

My dear Star,

This beautiful sunshiny month and day sure commenced with a tremendous crash for us. I am in the trenches on the first line and this morning, early, the kindly horde "across the way" (our quarrelsome neighbors) gave us a royal breakfast of shells and shrapnel, mines and various other explosives destined to send one on a long, long journey should he unfortunately step in one's way. The "meal" has just been finished and the "remains" are being cleared away. Good God, but war is Hell-on-earth! We have almost daily bombardments here but this has been the worst yet. Yesterday I was dodging 77's for a while.

Such is life on the firing-line, Jeannette,—no picnic. 'Tis *grimly* humorous. I wish I had a piano here. I'd soon drive the Germans back to their huts in Berlin. N'est-ce pas possible?

With "Europe's boot" (Italy) into the game now something ought to be doing mighty shortly.

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Up in the north things have begun to be pretty lively. The British forces are having their hands full practically all the time. Surely the German lines must drop back soon with all the pressure that is being laid on them. I still retain hopes that it will all be over by August or September. Many, though, believe it will last twelve or fifteen months more, but I doubt that a great deal.

Is our noble country going to uphold its American freedom and patriotism and show a strong forcible hand after all that has occurred so lately to give it provocation to do so? The U. S. certainly has sufficient grounds for something more adequate than words and diplomatic controversy—action. It galls me every day I read the paper for news about the States, and find the administration is still bantering over the present crisis. Has all national pride faded, all patriotism gone?

And how is school these last months? I can hardly realize it is the first of June. All the schools will be closing soon for the summer vacation. Were I back in the old High School with my old class I'd be graduating—the Class of '15. I'd like to be back to see the old classmates get their "sheepskins." Is this your last year, Jeannette?

I suppose you all have seen that busy little Mother of mine lately.

They are banging away at some aeroplane outside. I can hear the bombs bursting. It's a fascinating sight to see how close they come at times to the 'plane, but thus far I've never seen one

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hit. It must be just as pleasant as swimming in a pool of sharks and crocodiles to be up there with shrapnel bombs bursting—one doesn't know where they will burst.

Will it be the country or the seashore this vacation? I suppose the country with the cows, pigs, chickens, fresh eggs and milk and old clothes, won't it? You'll practise your singing on an old stile or stone wall, and capture half a dozen delicate country hearts in the bargain. "I love the cows and chickens but—this is the life."

3e Régiment marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bat., 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 101, France.
June 2nd, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Yesterday I received yours of the nineteenth—a mighty welcome, interesting and joy-giving letter it is too.

Really, Mom, I'm getting to feel decidedly flattered all around—every one seems to be so enthusiastic over me and my 1915 travels. I'm afraid I'm getting entirely too much credit but I am very happy to know that things are as you and Chaplain Pearce say in regard to the *Georgia*. I am slightly at a loss to determine exactly how things *are* so good. Somehow, Mother, I never seem to be lacking in friends (I mean ones other than my own dear Mother and brothers). Could or did ever a fellow have a better or dearer or more patient and

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loving Mother than have I, or kinder, better brothers? I doubt it with all my heart. . . .

The day before yesterday the Germans bombarded our section of the trenches (I am on the line) for about a half-hour with shrapnel and 77's. I was standing in the trench when the bombardment commenced and somehow the shells burst—first one to my right and then one to my left and so on and involuntarily I was dodging my head from one side to the other every time a shell burst—only a few metres to either side. That little rain of shells was nothing, though, to the welcome the Germans gave us yesterday morning early—the first day of beautiful June. For an hour steady they bombarded the line to the right of us, three towns back of us and blew up about five enormous mines. For that whole hour there was scarcely a lull between the banging and booming of the guns being discharged, the hiss-hiss of the shells hurling through the air over our heads and the terrific crashing and banging of their explosions. It was the first big bombardment I've seen and it sounded like Hell let loose sure and certain. After the first few moments of surprise were over I found myself holding my cupful of coffee which I happened to be drinking at the time without a tremble. We all sat on the barricades and walls and watched the shells burst and the mines—great enormous discharges of earth and dense black smoke—as they burst up high into the air. I have been trying to think how to describe the sound of a shell as it goes through the air, and

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the best I can do is to say that it sounds not unlike the sound made when one puts the palm of his hand quickly over the open end of an iron pipe. One can easily tell in what direction a shell is going by the sound of its course through the air. There is a good deal of aerial resistance to a shell and, of course, the larger the shell, the greater the resistance and sound. Artillery fire is practically all we are having along this section of the line. We are considerably further south than where the late advancements have been made and hard fighting has occurred. The British troops and the northern French ones are getting all that and it's terrible too. The losses have been quite heavy there with regard to men. With Italy on her way "to Berlin" from the South, through Austria-Hungary there ought to be considerable doing in the very near future. Italy's declaration of war has certainly created a great deal of enthusiasm among all the troops.

I see by yesterday's paper that the U. S. has received Germany's reply regarding the *Lusitania* affair and it has created anything but a favorable impression with the former country. I shouldn't think it would. Nor can I easily understand why we hold off from forcible action any longer. What, too, about the torpedoing of the *Nebraskan?* That seems to be entirely disregarded so far as I can see. Somehow it riles me—this continuous neutrality after such insults and degradations have been displayed. Where is the real American pride and

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patriotism? Is it all like the flimsy white clouds we see on a clear day that vanish into nothingness? Have we lost all our "Spirit of '76" or our "Spirit of '98?" Germany *is* a disease—not a civilized nation any more.

You will very likely be relieved to know that we have been provided with a device to prevent us from being asphyxiated by the asphyxiating-gas bombs that the Germans are using quite frequently in this 20th Century international warfare. Civilized barbarity! ! ! !

That was very nice of Mr. Pearce to invite you to the *Virginia* and show you around so thoroughly. The *Georgia* was not present but still in picturesque Vera Cruz, I suppose. There are quite a number of my old Training Station mates aboard the *Virginia*. The fleet review and parades must have been very pretty and inspiring sights. I've done quite a bit of marching here in this country but we haven't even the "Long Roll" to stir our hearts and ease the blisters on our feet. Thus far I've only heard one military band and that was at a concert while we were in repose at one of the towns during early April. We used to whistle and sing and once in a while some one would drag forth a mouth-organ and play. Even such poor music as these helped us over the roads and made us forget the aches and pains. The "Marseillaise" is a wonderful marching song. It sort of lifts one along.

I hope the fleet does get sent around to the Exposition for the men's sake but rather guess all

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the ships are being held within "easy reaching distance" in case of trouble with the disease across the seas. "Preparedness" *should* be our country's watchword at the present time and, in fact, for some years to come.

June 15th, 1915.

Your letter of May 22nd with the Fleet review news and the one of the 26th reached me last week. Many thanks for the clippings. Dave has them now. It surely must have been a big event—or rather a number of big events. The *Georgia* was present, I see. I thought she would still be at Vera Cruz on the watch for things which will never happen. The "boys" on board the ships sure must have had some fine times while on shore liberty. Did you see anything of the President during the parade in the city? He received quite an ovation. I rather guess that his popularity has increased tremendously now that he is taking the firm stand he is against Germany, now that William Jennings is out of the game—officially. That delights me exceedingly—the tardy resignation of "our man of peace."

The last few days we had in the trenches we were up about to our waists in mud and water. We had a very heavy rain one night and the trenches filled with water. It was misery in the tenth degree. The following morning there were quite a number killed and wounded just because they couldn't keep out of sight on account of the depth of the

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water while trying to clean it out and we all felt utterly down and out. So many became sick with bad colds, etc., that we had to be relieved and are now trying to regain our composure before going into the trenches again. I'm not exactly sick but I'm not feeling as well as I might either. I thank the good Lord I've a good strong constitution and some of that "stick-to-it-edness" which Mrs. Bradshaw (Donovan) used to tell her classes to cultivate. (I find the above-mentioned trait quite necessary, *with nerve*, to keep that bunch of fur addicted to my upper lip also. It's still growing—I *believe*.)

June 21st, 1915.

This is the year's longest day and I saw the sun rise gloriously and brilliant this morning at quarter to four. The days we're having lately are simply wonderful.

It's funny how every morning, just about sunrise, that the sentinels of both sides have a morning's greeting to each other. Every one starts to crow like a rooster and once in a while some French soldier or a Boche will call across the field d'affaire, "Bon jour," or some similar greeting. I guess it is the good weather that makes us all feel so sort of friendly (in that respect).

I am eagerly looking for those letters and Class History you say the good old classmates are going to send me. It surely is mighty nice and thoughtful of them all to think of me in such a generous manner. They will all be graduating some day this

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week, I presume—probably on Thursday or Friday night.

I managed to see Dave Wheeler for a short time yesterday afternoon (it is pretty difficult to get to other parts of the trenches for visiting purposes but I managed it yesterday all right) and he and I are anxious to do some sort of Independence Day celebrating ourselves even though we will most likely be here in the trenches that day and not, as would better suit us for such an occasion, in repose back of the line. The only thing I can think of as possible is to wear my silk flag and make as much noise with my rifle throughout the day as possible, but we few Americans may be able to get together somehow for a little while that afternoon and add something else to the day's hilarity. We'll be as patriotic as possible under the circumstances anyway. I'd like to blow up a few mines and have the artillery going all day, but in consideration of the fact that I am *not* the commander of this particular secteur and also after due contemplation of the disastrous effects to our noble enemy which, of course, would be unneutral-like and extremely discourteous to the aforementioned *noble* foe, I believe that such action will not be adhered to. Perhaps "Les Boches" will take it into their wooden tops to do a little celebrating of their own that day and bombard us as they do 'most every day.

It seems almost too good to be true, dear Mother, that *everything* is O. K. with me and the N. Dept.

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I do hope it is so and wish you or Rivers could find out to an absolute certainty and let me know. I never believed such an action would be taken by a ship's authorities. Was such action really taken by the "G." *or* by the Dept. itself? Why should, or, rather, *how* could a good record offset "d'tion" is what is sticking in my mind.

It surely was mighty hard luck that that brilliant young English aviator, Warneford, who so heroically won the V. C. and the Légion d'Honneur only a little over a week ago by vanquishing a Zeppelin in Belgium, should have been killed a couple of days ago when flying with that American journalist, Needham. I have often been wondering how Norman Prince, the young American aviator whom I met on board the *Rochambeau* and who joined, in February, the French Aviation Corps, is getting along. If you ever read anything concerning him in the papers please send me the article or let me know about it anyway. He surely is a fine young man.

The Germans don't seem to be calming down any in the States, do they? They certainly seem bound to make things come to a crisis at all hazards.

Paris, Gare du Nord.
July 7th, 1915.
British Red Cross Annex.

Just a few hasty lines to say I am in Paris for the two days. There were 21 of us came in yesterday afternoon getting here about 9.30 last night.

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Lydon, my friend from Boston, has been with me all the time. We are both almost "broke" but getting along O. K. in spite of that fact and enjoying the brief visit. Last night we took advantage of the hospitality of the British Red Cross Annex here in the R. R. Station for soldiers and slept soundly once again in "real" beds. This is the late P. M. now and we drifted in for a while after walking around the city taking in the sights. All this morning we tried to get some money from our Consul but (the fact astonishes both of us a mighty big lot) there was absolutely nothing doing as far as he was concerned. We *did* get a few francs from some other American which will carry us through fairly well, but we'll have to make use of the British hospitality again to-night I guess and—being Americans—I sure am decidedly rebellious about having to even think of doing such a thing.

The ladies here at the R. C. Annex have been treating us finely. I wonder where there is an English Red Cross Branch or Hospital where soldiers are not treated like real men?

Paris is very bright and gay now and crowded. One doesn't see very many Americans though.

The kind French gentleman, Mr. Guerquin, who was so good to me when I came over in Jan. is here in Paris at the same hotel where I stopped before. I stopped there last night and got my suitcase and wanted to get my shaving outfit and put some things in it. To-night I'll take it back and leave it there again.

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There's a piano in the Annex here and I've been playing on it some this afternoon. My! How good it is to touch the keys once more.

There are not many soldiers on the streets in the city—mostly those seen are wounded. There are plenty of officers though.

Friday morning we leave to go back to the regiment on the 6.30 train. We go out via Creil and Clermond and Montdidier. We have been around the latter town a good deal.

3e Régiment de marche. Premier Étranger,
1er Bat., 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 86, France.
July 10th, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

On the afternoon of the 7th I wrote you a rather hurried letter from the English Red Cross Canteen at the Gare du Nord, Paris, telling you we had come there for the two days' leave, that I was with Lydon and—broke.

The following day, the 8th, ten of us met at the Place d'Opéra and went to the Embassy to express our thanks to the Ambassador for using his influence to secure us the two days and we had as our spokesman, the father of one of the fellows, Mr. Chapman of New York, who is very wealthy and a very pleasant man. The Ambassador seemed very pleased at our coming to thank him and said he wished us success in getting through the conflict with all our limbs and with sound healthy bodies. After the

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visit Mr. Chapman made us all go with him to be photographed for the press as it is believed it was the American press in Paris who got the Ambassador to get us the leave, and Mr. Chapman is going to present each of us with a copy. He asked us if we would prefer to have them sent to us direct or to our parents, so some of us said (as they might spoil if in our hands) we would be glad if he sent them to our home so mine is going to you, dear Mother, as soon as it is finished and Mr. Chapman mails it. I wish all of us were there in the picture but unfortunately only ten of us are in it and, as Dave was left out of the two days entirely by being in the trenches at the time we left, he wasn't even in Paris to be in anything. Mr. Chapman sure did treat us all finely. One gentleman who was at the Embassy and talked with us handed out fifty francs for tobacco but we thought it best to divide it up, each getting a dollar so we could do what we liked with our share. It helped Lydon and I out quite a bit for eats, etc. Mr. Chapman treated us to two Havanas apiece anyway. That afternoon Lydon and I called upon Dave's wife whose hotel address I had and I had a very pleasant talk with her. That evening we had dinner with Lydon's corporal. The following morning (yesterday) we all took the 6 A. M. train back to here—a sorry bunch but mighty glad of the visit to gay Paris which sure did come very unexpectedly. I'm still pretty sleepy.

There is a chance that I will get the regular four

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days' leave to Paris that is being given to the regiment—to those who have been in the trenches fighting for six months. If I do it will not be for a month or 6 weeks yet anyway, so last night I wrote to Uncle Clair to send me if possible a money order for ten dollars so I can have something to get along on should I get that leave in late August or early September. I surely don't want to go four days there on charity as it was mighty distasteful to me to have to go even two days that way.

Our picture ought to be in the papers of the States—the *Herald* I should think anyway—one of these present days, and if so I only hope you see it and recognize your "youngest." He's sitting down in front between two others. The rest are standing behind. Directly back of me was Chapman, the son of the gentleman who treated us so finely and had the picture taken. I am not quite sure where Lydon was standing but believe he is the third from the left. The boy sitting on my left side is William Dugan from Rochester, N. Y. The one on the right is a jolly colored fellow. I am not sure what part of the States he hails from. The colored fellow standing toward the centre of the back row was the life of the party. I trust the photo. reaches you all right. The 3 on our coats stands for 3rd de marche. I had on a red cap—the rest gray, which is really what is worn now, but thus far I haven't been given one. If you notice the shoes we wear you will see they are pretty large and not very shapely but they are what are worn by the French

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Members of the "Légion Étrangère" on leave in Paris, July 7, 1915.

Edmond Genet is seated in the centre, with William Dugan, from Rochester, N. Y., on his left. Standing, third from the left, is Joseph Lydon, from Boston, and just behind Genet is Victor Chapman.

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troops and really are fine for marching—especially in the mud of this country which is very slippery. They are hob-nailed and therefore rather tiresome for walking on pavements and streets as we found in Paris. I can still wear a 5½ shoe though for I tried the pair I have in the suitcase in Paris.

MY DEAR ROD.,

My ear is O. K. now I am glad to be able to say. Whatever was the matter with it is all over. I can't imagine what made it so deafened for such a long time.

Just after I joined the 2nd de marche I looked around for two of my old friends who were with me at La Valbonne. I found that they had both been killed in an attack at Arras on June 16th. One was a young fellow from near Buffalo, Hall by name, and the other an older man—a Greek, naturalized for some years as an American and a fine man too. He had left $250 a month salary in the States (a railroad engineer or something like that) to come over here and he lost his life in the very first attack he made. I had received a letter from him only a week or so before that date. Believe me it cut me up a lot to hear he had gone. Little chance one has to last when charging in the face of the rapid-fire guns used in this conflict. They can cut a regiment down in less time than it takes to tell about it, believe me. One can easier run between drops of rain than between the bullets of one of those infernal machines. For my part I'd rather

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try the rain-drops. There isn't a bang-bang-gang to the blamed things. It's just a continuous sound like the propeller of an aeroplane when it's going around at 70 per.

An attack only lasts a bare ten minutes (usually less) in this war. Either the attacking party gets across in that time and drives the enemy from their trenches or else is cut down by the mitrailleuses before it can cover the few hundred yards between the lines. The latter is a pretty likely case.

The 2nd of August will mark the end of the 1st year of this Hell-on-Earth. How many more there will be remains to be seen. Let us hope and pray there won't be many. All hands, I believe, would gladly call quits were such possible. *Such* evidently isn't possible from present outlooks. This must be all for the present.

2e Régiment de marche. Premier Étranger,
Bat. B, 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
July 25th, 1915.

DEAR JEANETTE,

The last I sent you was a postal (mean of me wasn't it?) which was some time toward the end of June. Since then I have changed from the 3rd to the 2nd de marche as you may notice in the address I've given. The 3rd is no longer in existence as there were too few left in both divisions to do anything but unite them into one body. The year's fighting sure took its toll of the Légion Étranger.

I was in Paris from the 6th to the 9th of this

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month with the other Americans of the regiment. Ten of us were photographed for the Press and a copy is being given to each of us. Mine is being sent to my Mother and if she sends it on to Rivers to have a look at perhaps he may be induced by a request to give you a look also. We carried no weapons at the time so don't be frightened.

According to the latest despatches this human conflict will be over some time in or about October, 1931, so be looking for me soon. The lead is still in the ground yet that will send my soul into perdition, but all the same, Jeanette, I'm not taking any of those things people call chances—I carry an umbrella. That, by the way, has absolutely nothing to do with me burning my tongue with the coffee this morning. That was an unlooked-for taste of heat. There! I do rave, don't I? Where there's a beach there is sand but I haven't the grit to go on this way.

These last two weeks I've been making more war on some particular and delicious cherry-trees than I have on the Germans. I have, thus far, come out of the fray more fortunately than have numerous of my fellow fighters.

2e Régiment de marche. Premier Étranger,
Bat. B, 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
July 31st, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Received your letter. We are still in the same position as we were when I wrote last—Sunday,

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25th, and no news yet about any change. Dave and I are getting anxious to get into the line again. These "off periods" are somewhat monotonous.

As no letters *to* those engaged in the conflict are opened at all there is absolutely no chance of any such incoming letter being censored. Only our letters to outside friends, etc., are examined. It really is not necessary to be entirely neutral if you have any cause not to be. Your letters aren't censored nor are any others which *come* to me.

You know by this time that I have written to Chaplain Pearce and I am anxiously awaiting his reply which I hope sincerely will clear up the unsettled condition of my mind concerning the *Georgia*. I am very happy to say, dear Mother, that whatsoever has been the cause of my being let free and clear (if such *is* the case) is *not* on account of any trouble (to my utmost knowledge) between any of those on board and me. That is the cause Rivers also believes in but I assure you both that as far as my knowledge is concerned you are entirely wrong. It is just as much a mystery to me as it is to you. I only hope the Chaplain will be able to find out exactly about it.

Last evening Dave and I, on our usual evening stroll, contrived to find some raspberries and we sure were successful. They were about the most delicious I have ever eaten—growing wild up on top of the surrounding hills here. We've found huckleberries in abundance too. Many of the raspberries were an inch long—big and just ripe.

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The cherries by now are pretty well thinned out. They sure were fine while they lasted and I didn't get sick from them either.

I trust that photograph has by this time reached you safe and unbroken. It's time it did.

We are now in the most famous brigade of France —the Moroccan Brigade or Division of the 7th Army. It is really the Division in which the Légion Êtranger belongs. Before we were united with the 2nd de marche we were a part of the 2nd Army.

I suppose Rivers is now on his way down the Atlantic coast to Charleston, S. C., where he will see Rod. What battleship is he making the trip with this year? One of the 1st Division ships I presume—from New York. It's too bad none of the Fleet got around to the Exposition.

I'll let you know when I hear from Chaplain Pearce what he can tell me about my standing, etc. I sure am mighty anxiously waiting for his reply.

Lots of love to you, dear little Mother. It's best to hope for the best—that I will come back to you all some day—when this is all over. God grant me success is all I can pray for—for myself.

Enclosed is some real "Heather" which I picked to-day on the hillside. Some is white and some purple.

September 19, 1915.

I am far, far from where I last wrote—the place we were in for almost two months. Of course I

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cannot say where I am but I am at the front again although not yet actually in the first line. Long before this will reach you I'll probably be in the latter.

Both your letters (Aug. 23 and 30) reached me a while ago. I would have written much sooner but was too busy with the changes, etc. The postal secteur is the same—I believe always will be with the regiment anyway no matter where we happen to be located.

So far there has been nothing from Chaplain Pearce but I'm still hoping for a letter soon. What a shame that the good standing of the Naval Academy has been knocked down a few notches. It makes it so much worse, too, when certain Congressmen cannot have backbone enough to stand by the good reputation of the institution also, instead of thinking first of their pockets, etc., but such is the way of many of our statesmen-grafters.

If you ever read anything in the newspaper war news concerning the Moroccan Division of the Seventh Army containing the Arab troops, the Zuaves, and the "Légion," you can guess pretty correctly that I was in it. It might be an attack or a big review or some such an event.

There are worse things than shells with fire, Mother. I'm not looking forward with a great deal of hope to meeting any of those sort of war implements but I reckon I'll have my full share before this is over. The Allies' troops are frightful-

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looking creatures when they make a charge for the German lines,—respirators covering the mouth and nose, goggles over the eyes, grease covering the rest of the face and the hands and arms to prevent burning from petrol, etc., sometimes metal casques over the top of the head and a few other hideous preventatives. Sometime I'd like to get a picture of myself fixed up that way. We look more like the fiends of Satan himself than human men. I wonder the Germans don't often flee from mere fright at the sight of a horde of such creatures charging at them with bayonets fixed and shell bursting all around them. What a picture for later-day generations to gasp over—"their grandfathers charging in the war of 1914–15–16–17, etc., etc." (Let's hope and pray it will end before 1920 anyway.)

As it takes a month or so for us to exchange letters, Mother, I am asking now that before Xmas gets too near you get me one necessary article. At least I want it before Jan. 1st, if possible. You know I keep a diary and the one I have will, of course, be completed Dec. 31st, so if you will write to the people I always buy one from and get one for me for 1916 and send it over I'll sure be very obliged. Enclose 25 *cents* in *stamps* to Messrs. Laird and Lee, Inc., 1732 Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, for one of their 1916 diaries and time savers which they will send postpaid to you and then you can mail it on to me. I guess they will be able to let you have one by Nov. 15th and possibly sooner. I'd much rather have their diary than any

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other as I've always used theirs and it is an excellent one for my use.

In the past three days I've seen more big auto-trucks than ever before in my life. The French use them extensively for bringing food to the lines and in transporting troops quickly where there are no railroads. Coming out here the last two days or rather nights—for we marched at night—we were passed by line after line of auto-trucks—hundreds of them running often without lights one after another—very close and at high speed. The way they pound along the roads is marvellous. In spite of the amount of such heavy trucking over the roads all over France—especially near the lines—in the year of the war the roads are everywhere practically in perfect condition and never require much repairing. French roads are wonderful, Mother. I've got more praise to give to the Frenchman for his roads than for anything else. Our state roads can't come near to these highways of France.

I'm seeing lots of aerial warfare here too. Aeroplanes are all over and both sides shoot at the other's continually. It certainly is immensely interesting to watch them scout around over the lines and see the bombs burst about them. I've counted as many as fifty shells bursting around an aeroplane at the same time—within two or three minutes—and not one gets near enough to it to do any harm. It is seldom one is brought down, although where we were before I saw two French ones brought to

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earth within two days. One was the famous French aviator Pégoud.

While I write here the big guns are pounding away incessantly on all sides. Yesterday the cannonading was terrific and as this is early morning perhaps to-day's will be as bad. They like to hit it up toward sunset as a general rule. They keep going all night though, off and on. . . .

—— knows some young French soldier over here whom she met last summer when she was in France. He hasn't been to the front yet as far as I can learn from her. He's in the 97th Infantry, but I should worry over him! If I, as an American and with real service and real love and what-not else, can't win a true American girl, why, I'll rest my bones over here. I'm not losing any flesh worrying about ——'s French soldier friend. Some day I hope I'll meet him.

From the way things look it will be *some* time ere I'll get my leave to gay Paris but now that I'm out at the real front again I want to see some hard fighting before I get it anyway. It will be all the sweeter for the waiting, won't it?

I've been having some painful trouble in acquiring a bit of wisdom in the last two weeks. In other words, by way of explanation, my wisdom-teeth have been coming up from their hiding and one was extremely painful for a number of days. "All is well that ends well."

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2e Régiment de marche. Premier Étranger,
Bat. B, 4ème Compagnie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
September 22nd, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

There isn't much spare time for me to use in letter-writing now but I am using these few minutes to send this—possibly my last. There is a big fight coming, Mother dear,—that is all I dare to say but that little means a lot. Should I get through alive or well enough to write I'll do so the very first chance I get so you won't be held in suspense too long, but should you not hear from me within—say two weeks after you get this don't put it down as positive that I am gone for good. I might be a prisoner, or too wounded to get a word to you or something similar. "A bad penny usually turns up sometime."

As I presume this will go to Rivers and Rodman you will all get my farewell. God grant it is *not* my last but you may all be mighty sure "the Kid" isn't going into the battle with any "yellow streak" or "the white feather."

God bless you all, dear little Mother, and—au revoir.

Your loving son,
EDMOND.

October 11th, 1915.

DEAR RIVERS,

As you will already know from my recent letter to Mother I have been through a considerable

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amount of horror and real war these past three weeks. I'm not yet out of it by any means either. If it had not been for that I would have answered your letter very much sooner, but as it is there hasn't been more than time for me to scarcely think with any degree of adequacy let alone write letters. I'm still out on the lines but can get letters back now so will try and get this off this afternoon. We had three days' repose back of the lines about six days ago and so I was able to squeeze in a letter to Mother. Then I didn't think we would get out to the line again quite so soon after all the misery we had just gone through with, but we did all right and my lost sleep and energy is yet far from being made up. We haven't encountered quite the Hell this last period that we had the first (which I wrote to Mom. about) but we've had enough to want to get back behind the lines again for a good rest and clean-up.

My comrade Dave Wheeler was wounded by a ball in the leg in the attack and I have since had a letter from him saying he was in Paris in a hospital and I guess he is pretty well off. His wound I don't believe is a very bad one. Three nights ago another one of my American friends was put back behind the lines with a wound in his knee from a bit of shell. One of the American fellows lost his life in the attack but otherwise the "U. S. Volunteers" are in fairly good shape—only blamed tired out.

Mom. had a letter from Chaplain Pearce in

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answer to the one I wrote him and she sent it to me. There seems to be nothing at all to do but just wait until I can get back and then, through some authority, find out exactly what my standing is, etc. If it is necessary to go to the President afterward we can figure out that problem better then than now. I surely hope all is O. K., dear Brother, but if not perhaps my service over here will help a good deal toward making things all right. Let us hope so.

I certainly have been through enough fire lately to last and satisfy any one for a lifetime, but there's lots more coming I know. How I came through alive and unhurt is more than I can tell. So many of us were cleaned out in the attack—a matter of a brief ten minutes. Oh it's Hell-on-earth all right, Rivers, and no mistake. Anybody who has the least bit of heart trouble or nervous prostration sure wants to keep out of a modern war. It's no place for an invalid.

I've become a regular field-rat. Whenever we get anywhere within range of shell-fire and there isn't a trench already there we immediately dig individual holes or dugouts to get into for protection from shells. That doesn't lessen the danger much though, for it doesn't prevent a shell from landing directly into such a trench and many a poor fellow has found he has only dug his own grave.

I've been able to pick up a few German trophies from the captured trenches but the question now is —will I be able to get them with my things at

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Paris? I will if I can get my permission but that is decidedly doubtful. One cannot carry trophies around very much when he is campaigning.

Ever your loving brother,

EDMOND.

P. S.—All letters coming to me from the States now are censored by the military authorities.

2e Régiment de marche. Premier Étranger,
Bat. B, 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
October 22nd, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Surely was I glad to get yours of Sept. 27th. In the same mail was one from Chaplain Pearce with an enclosed letter which he wrote in July and which was sent back on account of the address being wrong. In his last he says, "A few days ago I had a talk with Comd'r Littlefield of the *Georgia* in your behalf but could get little information from him as to your status. My advice to you would be to get your mother to write to the Sec. of Navy and not you yourself as I stated in my previous letter. Still she might see the Congressman in her district to see about getting matters straightened out. Many American boys have been brought back to the U. S. But this may have been at the request of parents. I do not know whether this would happen in your case or not should the Department hear of your whereabouts. And however I presume they do, as all on your ship know."

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In his former letter he speaks of trusting that my status is O. K. and that I may be able to return to the U. S. some time without being punished.

Repose began yesterday and we are far from the scenes of our late fighting. Paris isn't so far away from our present location and possibly we may get our leaves to there soon. I sure hope so anyway as I want to see Dave Wheeler while he is there, for as soon as he is well enough he will probably get reformed [invalided] (he very likely will be unable to continue as a soldier as his leg will never be strong enough for heavy marching) and then he and Mrs. Wheeler will beat it back to their home in Buffalo.

2e Régiment de marche. Premier Étranger,
Bat. B, 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
October 22nd, 1915.

DEAR STAR,

It was somewhere back in early September when I received your two letters, Aug. 12th and 25th and here am I just endeavoring to scrawl a reply. Well, considering what I have been through in the last month's time perhaps you will overlook my gross negligence. Possibly you will have heard from Rivers something about the fighting I have gone through as I wrote to him a week or so ago just after the worst had passed to bygone days. There was a great deal of advanced fighting done by the French forces along the lines during this past month and I was in a good deal of the horrors. It was only yesterday when we finally began a

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repose which we all hail with joy because we surely need it. A more worn-out lot of troops are, I guess, hard to find. I say a lot but, to tell the truth, there aren't a very great many of us left to tell the tales in our regiment. I am pretty much at a complete loss as to how I managed to come through it all alive and unhurt for we certainly have been through a steady succession of ghastly horrors, attacks, under fire practically for a month and what-not else. In an attack we made on Sept. 28th, out of our company of 250 there are not quite 60 left, including the new officers (for we lost all our officers except one). The rest were either killed or wounded by the murderous mitrailleuse and shell-fire which we faced. One of my American comrades who was wounded in the leg by a ball and is now in Paris with the American Ambulance getting over it, writes and declares that I surely must be a "Little Devil" and bullet-proof to have come through that attack alive and untouched. Sometimes I wonder if he is not pretty much in the right. That same night there were but thirty-two of us able to be collected from two companies (500 men) who were able to assist in carrying back behind the lines some of the badly wounded.

On the first day of the actual fighting, the 25th, I believe I had the closest shave that I've had yet. We were advancing after the retreating Germans who had been driven from their intrenchments and they were firing big shells into the advancing ranks. Our section happened to get exposed to

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view on top of a ridge and immediately they hurled a huge 210 shell at us. Somehow we felt it coming—heard it too, and we all just dropped flat on our stomachs in the soft mud. It was one of those instances when a small fraction of a second counts and it counted that time in my favor. The shell sung its sweet love-song just over my shoulders and cranium and if I hadn't gripped my fingers into the mud I surely would have been lifted into the air from the force of the intake of air. As it was I felt myself lifted an inch or so and then—crack! The huge shell burst a couple of yards behind me and killed two of my squad and wounded four or five others. Since that day I love such shells only at a *great, great* distance—a mile or so, you understand.

There are many little bits of interesting things to say and describe about the sights of a battlefield after the battle and trenches which have been stormed and taken, but really it is best that you simply imagine such sights for they are too morbid and ghastly to write about. You'd have horrible nightmares for nights and nights after.

Besides all the strain of being continually under fire we were soaked by rain almost all the time and slept in mud and water every night. You can imagine how we felt and looked after ten or twelve days of such life.

How is life in Ossining now?—settling down for the winter, I presume. It sure is getting chilly over here now. This time of the year France is

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very rainy and damp too, which only adds to the misery of the cold. Lord, before we realize it Christmas will be here! I've been here over nine months already.

Best wishes to you and all the folks, Jeanette, and do write whenever you can. Believe me, letters are a blessing to me.

Ever sincerely,

EDMOND.

2e Régiment de marche. 1er Étranger, Cie. C 4.
Secteur postal 109, France.
October 28th, 1915.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Dave Wheeler, in a letter he wrote to me from Paris which came yesterday, brought to my notice an article which appeared in the *Evening Sun*, Oct. 5th. I write its contents:

"American Soldiers in France.

"The account between America and France, opened at the time of the Revolution that gave us liberty, is being liquidated. In this war young Americans with the spirit of Lafayette have thrown their lives and their fortunes into the balance and as this morning's despatches indicate a number of them have been killed fighting in the French army.

"It is by a curious chance that among the names appears that of Edmond C. C. Genet of New York. Genet was the name of the Frenchman who came here over a century ago to plead that the United States take sides in the French war with England.

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By the wisdom of Washington that plea was disregarded. The young nation would have endangered its own life without being able to render any very substantial service to France. It was ours rather to demonstrate the possibility of realizing the world's ancient dream of a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

"But standing apart from entangling alliances, America has done better service, by setting an example and at times, as in the case of China, through mediation. And now her sons, fighting in the Foreign Legion, are paying the actual debt, man for man, incurred in the Revolution. Our contributions to hospital service must also be counted as in some sense a reimbursement for the investment made so long ago by France in American good-will."

A friend of Dave who knows of me through him sent him that article and he sent it to me. I hope you or Rivers or any of my relations or friends failed to see it in the paper or the article which came out the following day which Dave tells me about. This one I wrote above puts me down as being killed. The other one, printed the following day, Dave writes, had all the Americans killed but *one*. They had it that I, in the attack we made, when all the rest were slain, hid in a hole made by a bursted shell until the Tirailleurs (the Arab troops) charged. Then I up and charged with them killing, as Dave says they put in the article, about 10,000 Germans. I'd sure enjoy charging, with bayonet fixed, the blamed reporters who fixed up those articles out of

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E. C. Genet

"Citizen" Genet.

First Minister from the French Republic to the United States in 1793.

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their senseless craniums. They deserve the extreme pleasure of taking part in one of those attacks. Possibly their minds would be more calm and sedate thereafter.

I can well imagine your feelings if you read such an article as that first (as this morning's despatches indicate, etc., and my name right out—the only one mentioned in the article—as being one of those reported killed). Curse all newspaper reporters!

We're in repose now and have been ever since the middle of last week. I'm pretty well rested now and am mighty anxious to get that 6-day leave to Paris. Six days' vacation there would put me in fine shape and feelings I know, but it's very doubtful if such is obtainable.

Joseph Lydon, the young fellow from Mass. of whom I spoke in one of my last letters as having been wounded, is out of the war for good. He had his right leg amputated about 3 inches below the knee and is in a French hospital. When he gets well enough he'll be reformed [invalided] and I suppose can get some sort of a pension from the French Government for the loss of half his leg. That's mighty poor recompense for one's leg though, and, poor fellow, I sure do pity him and the future he has before him of having to hobble around with crutches for the rest of his life. Dave is getting along pretty well but says his leg is still painful and it will be six or more months before he will be well enough for an active life.

If, when they do sail, which will be probably

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some time yet, I know you will be around N. Y. I'd like you to meet them there and see for yourself what two fine friends I've made over here and incidentally thank them for all their good friendship to me.

If, If, last year on Oct. 26th, when I was in Ossining after being with you on the 25th at Oaks, Pa., etc., on my five-day furlough from the *Georgia* (you remember, don't you?) some one had told me that exactly one year later I would be passing in review before President Poincaré, King George V. of England, the two Generals-in-Chief of France and England—Joffre and French—and many other high officials, I surely would have asked what that particular individual had drank last, but such has proved to be the truth. Our entire Brigade and Division Marocaine was reviewed by those high dignitaries on Oct. 26th, the most beautiful day we have had for two weeks, amid the martial strains of "God Save the King" and the "Marseillaise," and when we marched past the reviewing group I had the fine fortune to be on the very inside rank—nearest to them so that I had an unobstructed and very close view as I marched by. The President and King stood in front, Poincaré in his usual black frock and black cloth cap, the King in Khaki. Behind stood "Grand-pop" Joffre and Gen'l French and lined up behind was a long line of notable generals and dignitaries.

Once during the summer we were reviewed near Belfort by President Poincaré and Gen'l Joffre.

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That was just before we left for the front for the late fighting. This was a far bigger and grander review though and King George of the British Empire was there. Believe me I held my chin up and kept my eyes open. Directly after we all lined up along the road over which the reviewing party returned in their autos and presented arms as they passed. I was again in the front rank. Our colors, presented to us by President Poincaré only in the summer at that other review I spoke of, were this time presented with the Croix de Guerre (the 3rd medal of France) for our bravery in the late fighting.

Every letter I get now from America has been opened by the military authorities and then resealed with their sealing paper.

2e Régiment de marche. Premier Étranger,
Cie. B 4. Secteur postal 109, France.
October 30th, 1915.

After a long wait for word from you I have today at last received yours of October 12th. What an unnecessary lot you all have passed through, say I,—all because a few blamed reporters had to get entirely too strong with their remarks and despatches and everything else. Oh I'd like to put my hands on them, believe me, they'd begin to realize that Genet's descendant, etc., etc., was far, far from being killed or missing and knocked unconscious by any gas bomb. Gas bomb! A fine story, indeed! Why there was only one young American killed in

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the 1st regiment (I don't know anything about the 2ème Étranger—perhaps a number of the Americans in it *were* killed). Farnesworth of New York was the one killed of the 1st. Wheeler was the only one wounded (of the Americans, I mean) in the 1st. It sure does rile me when I realize all the worry and anxiety you, dear Mother, had to go through for nothing. There was even some article about me and some narrow escape I had from death, etc., etc., in one of Baltimore's papers for I had a letter yesterday, a long nice one, from Mrs. Lloyd. She didn't tell much about it but spoke of reading about the very narrow escape and honors, etc. Ossining, I take it, had its papers cluttered too, as one of my girl friends there wrote me and asked how badly I was wounded and whether I was in a hospital, etc. I suppose I'll be getting letters for the next month with such news—all resulting from those (never mind what I call them) reporters. It seems to me they might give me a sort of royalty for being such an easy write-up for their spongy domes to enlarge upon. Suppose you had had heart trouble and died from the shock of seeing my name among the killed or missing! Well, let that instance be a good example, Mother, in case others follow. *Don't* believe me dead until you hear OFFICIALLY and finally from the French military authorities and even *then* there might be a chance that I be still alive—a prisoner or something else. Newspapers are *never* going to make sure of facts. They get *first* reports and mere rumors and those are all they ever care

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to get. The story is easy to put out afterward. Another reminder—*don't* get rattled over my address. It's always the same whether I've been in a fight, etc., or not,—until I write a different one to you. If I'm wounded and not with the regiment but in a hospital the letters coming for me to the regiment are remailed from there to me and as soon as I get settled in a hospital I can send you all my new address. It's a wonder this last letter of yours got to me at all. You had absolutely no postal secteur number on it at all and for the past four or five months you've been sending your letters to 109. Why didn't you use that?

Surely am I grateful to all the many thoughtful relations and friends whom you say wrote to you in your hour of sorrow and suspense and then again in your later time of gladness. God bless them all —you dear loving Mother, above them all—as He has blessed me and watch over you all as He has watched over me. With my whole heart and soul I thank Him for his guidance. Do you remember that hymn you sent to me—"O Jesus, I have promised, etc."—where it reads "I shall *not* fear the battle if Thou art by my side?" I thought of it as I was charging through the hail of bullets and shell in the attack on Sept. 28th and afterward—that night when it was all over—that wonderful fact came home to me—that surely He must know of my utter faith in His guidance and have watched over me that day and all the days of horror that came before and followed that day. Oh Mother

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dear, what better teacher is there than experience—for one to believe in God as well as to learn the ordinary lessons of life?

Dear old Dave Wheeler—how glad I was yesterday when I learned that he was to receive the Croix de Guerre for his brave stand on the 28th.

I expect to get my longed-for leave to Paris this next week if all goes well. I sure hope I get it for I surely have waited and wished for it long enough—ever since early in the summer.

And you, dear little Mother? I'd like to reach my arms across the Atlantic and give you a big, big hug. You've had entirely too much worry all for nothing and it's one mighty big shame. Misery to all reporters and *never* believe newspaper articles and *their* "official despatches." "A bad penny always turns up."

Ever your loving son,

EDMOND,

Who's very much alive and ready for many more big fights. May God guide me through them all and back to you.

Hotel de Moscou,
10 Cité Bergère, Paris.
Le 6 novembre, 1915.

It took almost all of yesterday, on account of the slowness of the military trains, to get here but I finally did and reached the hotel about 6 o'clock, finding a mighty kind and hospitable welcome from the proprietor, Mr. Truchet and more than that

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from Mr. and Mrs. Guerquin who immediately took me out to dinner with them. What cheer such good friends are to one in a foreign city can only be discovered by the actual experience.

It is not yet nine o'clock (A. M.) and I am waiting to go to the bank at that hour to get my draft cashed. I've already been out for a walk on the boulevard and had coffee and rolls in one of the many pleasing little cafés along the way. After the bank satisfies my desires I am going to make speed for the American Ambulance to see Dave Wheeler with some fresh fruit if I can find any on the way.

Yes, I did know that big advance was coming about a week previous to it so that's why I wrote the letter of Sept. 19th to prepare your mind for whatever might happen but I sure didn't think *false* reports would supersede real facts as they did. As I said in my last letter—*DON'T* take any stock in newspaper talk again. Wait for the *facts*—from headquarters always, for they'll come sooner or later if there are any to come.

I'm mighty glad you find the new work so pleasant, dear Mother mine, but please, please take it easy.

Don't, of course, send letters here in reply to this but to the Regiment as usual as I'll be back by next Friday. I go back that morning. That gives me 7 nights and 6 days here which is going to be fine and mighty enjoyable.

On Sunday (to-morrow) I intend to go to ser-

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vice and Holy Communion at the American Church of the Holy Trinity at 23 rue d'Alma. I'm certainly glad I'll have a Sunday here in Paris and be able to take Communion.

Au revoir pour le présent, chère Mère,

EDMOND.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
November 22nd, 1915.

DEAR BILL,

About the middle of October we left the late scenes of operations at Champagne where we had, as you know, such a strenuous and hard month of steady fighting. We left—a tired and worn-out Corps of troops—and mighty glad to at last get prospects of a prolonged repose. Ever since then we've had it almost to perfection in a very attractive village not a great ways to the northward of Paris.

October 26th saw our entire army corps, the Division Marocaine, gathered for a grand big review by President Poincaré, King George of Gt. Britain, General Joffre,—the grand-père of the armées Françaises—and various other high dignitaries; also the Prince of Wales. That sure was some vast review. I saw it in motion pictures last evening and was considerably thrilled by the vastness of that army in which I was a participant on October 26th. When we were passing in review past the President and the King I had the fine fortune to

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be on the very inside file so that my view of them was unobstructed. Our regimental colors received the Croix de Guerre that day for our bravery in the fighting at Champagne. It certainly was inspiring to hear the bands playing "God save the King" and the "Marseillaise" and to see so many thousands of bayonets flashing in the sunlight that it looked like a vast sea of silver points.

On November 5th I got off to Paris for six days leave and I sure did have six days of unbounded pleasure. They passed all too quickly, you may be sure. It was so good to get into Paris again after all that horror and ghastliness at the front. The few friends I have there did everything possible to give me a fine time and, believe me, Bill, they succeeded beyond measure. Dinners, the theatre, sight-seeing, movies and everything,—all were a part of those six days. Then came the 12th and I had to take a sad and tearful farewell of such joys and board le chemin de fer pour le régiment.

Your fine letter of Oct. 25th came on the 13th and I surely was delighted to hear from you, old Chum.

You all had a very unnecessary amount of anxiety over those newspaper accounts of me because they were utterly and absolutely unfounded—the mere supposition of a few brainless reporters who thought we Americans were good, handy, exciting material on which to build a nice dime-novel story. I'd like to wring their blamed necks for they had poor Mother and Rivers and Rodman and all my relatives and friends nearly wearing mourning. *Motto*—

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DON'T believe newspaper accounts. 99% are fictitious and the other 1% is misprint.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
November 23rd, 1915.

My dear little Mother,

I have just sent you a post-card photograph of myself I had taken while in Paris. It's not a very good picture but one can scarcely expect the very best results when only paying 2 francs 50 for a half dozen postal photos.

Of course you have long since received the letters I wrote during the time we were around Champagne and so know something of my experiences there during the bloody operations. Last evening there were motion pictures shown to us here in the village and among them was a film showing the scenes at Champagne just following the attack and the 20,000 prisoners taken during those days. It certainly was a treat to me to see it all—through a film. (I saw all I wished to see in the reality while I was there—a suffering participant.)

Although I saw many, many of the prisoners being brought in when we were there I never really saw them all together (as the picture last evening showed) enclosed in a barb-wire enclosure—dirty, bloody, most of them wounded, tired,—friendless, and I could not help realize their pitiable misery. Many of them, though, looked unblamably happy.

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They were getting out and away from the horrors for the rest of the war.

On Sept. 25th I remember we passed in our own trenches, just following the attack made on the German lines in the morning, a lot of the wounded prisoners and they were a sight to give most anyone a heart-throb. Some were covered with blood from big gashes or bayonet wounds. Most of them were terrible young too—boys of 16 and 17 years. I saw several fellows who had their arms around some comrade's neck—worn out, weak and perhaps half heart-broken. I can imagine my feelings if I were in their place.

Another film shown was of the King of England's and the Prince of Wales's late visit to President Poincaré and their review of our Division Maroc. on Oct. 26th. Those were wonderful pictures,—inspiring to see that vast review of the Colonial troops, Zouaves, Tirailleurs, our noble Legion and the Cavalry as we passed before the reviewing party. I do hope you and Rivers and Rod. see those pictures when they are shown in the States for very probably they will be—or ones like them, at some time. You'd have a useless and fruitless task in looking for your son among that vast army. He's only a tiny unit of those thousands, but it will give you some idea of the vastness of one small portion of the fighting forces de la République Française, dear Mother, and I feel certain 'twould make you sit up and hold your breath some.

It is miserably damp and cold here now. The

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sun hasn't been out to amount to anything for days and days. I'm thoroughly disgusted with the climate of Western Europe. God's country is never like this.

I hope you or Rivers or Uncle Clair have done something about the Navy Dept. matter. Let me know just as soon as you hear from the Dept. I'm almost positive the answer won't be at all joyful, Mother, but somehow we're going to clean decks some day.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère.
Secteur postal 109, France.
November 29th, 1915.

ÉTOILE ADORABLE, ! ? ? ?

Don't dare call me any such name as that. 'Tis too high and lofty for such as I. If you don't know what an *étoile* is get a French translation book and look it up.

Have you been spilling ink for me lately? I certainly hope you have because I haven't had any of your bright literature for a good many weeks and I've been looking for some right along.

The six shortest days of this month I spent in bright little Paris. I say the six shortest days because they were just that to me. Why is it the days of one's best pleasures have to speed by the quickest? They sure did hum past! I had a great time though in spite of the shortness of the time. If I remember correctly I sent you a few lines of script on a postal one of those days. I sent several

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postals but it is yours I remember particularly 'cause I believe I imbedded my love on it—or am I thinking of one of the other cards to some other "young thing"? Gosh! Maybe I am! I do get absent-minded occasionally, chère amie, but you'll pardon the deficiency, won't you please?

I hope you survived Thanksgiving Day. I harbored a most agonizing appetite—agonizing because I was several thousand miles from one of those real American turkey and squash (they can't fool me about it being pumpkin) pie dinners. Oh! it sure was a hungry day for me but I still exist and next year's Thanksgiving Day I pray I will be where I can just pour in the good food and I'll have a double appetite then to make up for this year's lost feed.

I do wish you would send me a little sunshine, Jeannette. There's nothin' but rain and then some more and wet snow and frost every blessed day. It has been that way this entire month and bids fair to be the same all December and January. Over here it's a fine day if it just rains part of the day and a bad day if it rains all day. The nights don't count; I sleep then—*if* it's not too cold.

By the time this reaches you it will be nearly Christmas time so right now I'm going to wish you all a mighty bright and merry Christmas season and a very, very joyful happy New Year. May it contain also a treaty of peace and complete tranquillity for these hell-loving nations over here so I can hike back to the native heath.

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Don't neglect to spill considerable ink on my account,

Affectionately,
EDMOND.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
November 30th, 1915.

DEAR RIVERS,

We are not out at the actual front just now but I think it will not be very many weeks before we get orders for the line. We've been in repose ever since the middle of October. This week the Legion is being fitted out in Khaki uniforms and discarding the gray ones. They (the gray) are most certainly very invisible but the khaki is the more practical and is being adopted almost universally.

When I went to Paris early this month I took with me quite a bunch of cartridges and trophies of various sorts which I picked up in the captured German trenches at Champagne. I left them there in the suitcase. I cut one belt-plate from off the belt of a dead Boche. It has a crown in the centre with "Got Mit Uns" written around the crown, not a bad souvenir. I picked up three fine German bayonets while there but lost them later before I could get them back. It's not very easy to carry many things while fighting anyway. One wants to be as light as possible.

I sure had a dandy time in Paris with Dave and Mrs. Wheeler and Mr. and Mrs. Guerquin. They did all sorts of things to give me a fine time—din-

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ners and the theatre and sightseeing, etc. 'Twas all too short a time. The hotel propriétaire was only going to charge me 2 francs 50 (50 cents) a day for my room on account of my being a soldier but I made him take 3 francs a day. Pretty cheap—about $4.20 for 6 days and 7 nights, wasn't it? He has been fine about keeping my suitcase there safely for me all the time and has readily sent me any clothes from it I have written to him for and he has also agreed to handle any money Uncle Clair may send me, change it at Paris and send it on to me by the regular French military letter of recommendation which all the soldiers get their money at the front with and thus save me a lot of unnecessary trouble. There's no necessity of questioning his honesty either. Mr. Guerquin has known him a long, long time and I am sure he is perfectly reliable.

On Sunday I received a fine box of chocolates from Dave Wheeler. He and his wife have sent me candy and magazines and fruit cake quite often. A fellow couldn't want for better friends.

Did you enjoy Thanksgiving Day? Not being a French holiday, it passed the same as any other day here but I sure had an appetite all the same for the usual Turkey dinner we always had in the years gone by. I sure hope this hell will have long since ended by Thanksgiving of 1916 and we'll all have a rousing big feed together then to make up for last time.

This letter will not reach you until nearly Christmas time so I'd better wish you a mighty merry day of it now than wait 'til later when it will be too late.

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May the New Year be much, much more prosperous and bright for us all, Rivers, than those past ones have been.

Régiment de Marche de la Lègion Êtrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
December 4th, 1915.

MY DEAR ROD.,

Yesterday I received your letter of Nov. 13th and with it the diary 1916. Many, many thanks for both. I have been wondering what adventures and wanderings will be put down in its pages ere 1916 is closed? The 1915 book is fairly exciting that way. I really hope that somewhere about June or sooner I'll be able to write down "La Paix Européenne" in its annals. I saw in a French paper several days ago that our tin-car manufacturer, Mr. Ford, of Detroit, Mich., declared this conflic-tion of modern barbarians would gently and surely terminate by "le Jour de Noël." Yes! Possibly for a six-day suspension of fighting if the Pope at Rome succeeds with his petition to the belligerent powers. I reckon that will be all the termination of the war there will be—if that! . . .

Hospital Anx. 307
(postmarked Neuilly sur Seine,
Dec. 5, 1915).

MY DEAR MRS. GENET,

Your boy's thanks and your own are very grate-ful but I hope you both know that he gave more

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than he got. We were the only two Americans in the battalion and his company was more cheering than I can tell you in the dull days of "repose" before we went into action.

In the advance of Sept. 28 Genet kept on until only one man of his company was left—the rest were shot or had taken refuge in the trenches. It was only then that they decided to retreat. Genet's companion got rattled and was killed but your son owes his escape to his own coolness and good judgment. As all the officers were shot he probably wont be decorated but the regimental flag received the war cross for the action in which he took so gallant a part.

The Legion is so reduced in numbers I doubt if it takes part again in any important manœuvres but if it does I am sure Genet's cool head will carry him through without a dangerous injury. Musgrave, a Texan, has the same steady nerve and he has been in four attacks without a scratch and that is just the kind of men who win the charges.

If I can get back to the Legion I shall try to get in your son's squad, but if my leg stays crooked I hope to return home and have the honor of calling on the mother of the bravest boy I know.

Yours very truly

DAVID E. WHEELER.

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Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
December 22, 1915.

My dear little Mother,

Contrary to my expectations we are not going to be in quietude and repose on Christmas. Yesterday, amid a drenching rain and snow, we marched over thirty kilometres of muddy sloppy roads to the front. God only knows what's in store for us ere another week is up but I have my suspicions. Noël is going to be no merry day for this Division by any means I'm sure, and Christmas week—well—'twill be the last week of the year and more than likely the last week for more than a few of the Légion Étrangère.

Your package has thus far failed to reach me but I am still hoping it hasn't been lost or nabbed. I had a large Christmas package from the American Church at Paris. It was filled with candy, some things to wear such as a muffler, gloves, etc., and magazines with best wishes from the Americans of the Church. What do you suppose I received the day before yesterday from Dave and Mrs. Wheeler? It 'most overwhelmed me. It was a regulation officer's rainproof "slicker," and a dandy gift! I found it most serviceable yesterday in the march and it is going to be mighty convenient to me at all times as this is one rainy country especially in winter. It must have cost at least seven or eight dollars and I sure was overwhelmed when I thought of their splendid generosity. I feel as if I am doing

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all the receiving and none of the giving but it doesn't seem to matter to them in the least. They are friends among a million!

I've too much to do to write any more now. I want to get this off while there is a chance of its going out. Before I close, dear Mother, let me impress on your mind this fact:—*DON'T* believe any newspapers should they report anything about me. If I am killed or missing or dangerously wounded you'll be notified in due time by the authorities themselves. And *DON'T* worry about me. If God means me to die fighting for France worry isn't going to keep me alive. I'm here to "DO or DIE."

With every bit of love,

Your loving son,

EDMOND.

December 24th, 1915

I am glad to know that all my letters have reached you and Rivers and Rod.

I wrote you the day before yesterday just after getting out to the front. Thus far we have done nothing and we may leave for the interior in a few days. Of course nothing is definite and if anything was definite I couldn't tell you anyway.

It is fine and generous of the ladies of that Phila. Colonial Chapter to send me a box and for the good Ossining friends and New York relations to think of me and send me Xmas boxes. I feel altogether too popular for my position.

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I suppose from your inquiry that you think the "Exp" I write before my name on the envelopes has something to do with my rank but let me assure you, dear Mother, that you are far wrong. It simply means in English—"from" or "the sender" and stands for the French word "Expéditeur." Several people have written it before my name when addressing letters to me which must have looked extremely foolish to the French authorities just as it would look ridiculous to our postmen if a Frenchman wrote "From" before the name of an American thinking it was a title or such.

I don't expect to-morrow will be a very merry Christmas but I'm not complaining. I'm happy in the realization that my friends are all on the other side of the water or away from this conflict where they can have a merry Christmas.

The sun came out for a few minutes yesterday and I had a chance to see what it looked like. It's a decidedly infrequent visitor over here. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder."

Let me tell you a funny incident which occurred last week during some sham military manœuvres of the Regiment. The Commandant of our Battalion is very jolly and given to make funny remarks now and then. In looks he reminds me of our pictured Santa Claus, short, round and jolly with flowing white whiskers covering his shirt-front. During a sham attack he suddenly pretended that he had been hit and killed by a bursting shell. "Je suis mort, je suis mort!" he cried and every one laughed.

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A little later two soldiers in the same spirit of amusement declared they too were dead—just to get out of some work which had to be done at the moment. The Commandant glared at them for a minute. "Vous êtes morts?" he questioned; "bon, je suis chef des morts, allez avec moi!" They followed him.

I do hope your package reaches me all right very shortly. I can't see why the authorities could have any reason for withholding it from me. Everything you say is in it is permissible for the soldiers. Perhaps all four boxes will reach me before January. With all love to you and best wishes to every one,

Ever your loving son,

EDMOND.

Jan. 1, 1916.

DEAR GENET,

This is the first time I have written 1916 and there is no one I would rather begin the year with than you. Under separate cover registered I shall send your money order which will not arrive as soon as this.

I hope Lydon comes to the A. A. During my permission I am required by the bureau de Santé to report there daily. This I am very glad to do for living in Paris there is nothing better to occupy one than surgery. The bureau talk of disaffecting me to the service of the hospital at the end of my leave of absence. I still hope to return to the Legion if I am not lame and to get reformed [in-

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valided] if I am. To stay in Paris till the end of the war would be too beastly. It is against the French rules to reform [invalid] a one-legged man until he has a wooden leg so Lydon had better get busy. I don't know about the M. M. (médaille militaire) but hope he gets it, more because he stuck to his post when others ran than because he is shy one pin.

I have received the papers of my war cross (croix de guerre) so I know you were a true prophet and thank you very much for watching the Bulletin for me. I watch it too but sometimes miss a copy. It will probably be months before the citation is published.

The skin has quite closed over the hole in my leg and to-day for the first time it does not require a dressing.

With all best wishes I am

Yours very truly,
DAVID E. WHEELER.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
January 6th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

It was December 24th when I last wrote to you, but I have been holding off this long in hopes your Xmas package would arrive but thus far not one of the four you wrote me were being sent have come. I don't quite understand why they haven't

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as it seems to me they are long overdue. Anyway I do hope they haven't been nabbed and thus never will reach me. I want those two good suits of woolen underclothes and the gloves too much to want them to clothe some one else.

Just to-day we, the squad I'm in, had our picture taken and when it is finished and we get the cards (it is to be on post-cards) I'll send you one. We received our new khaki overcoats yesterday so the picture shows us in them. Eventually the Legion will all be clothed in khaki garb but now only the first battalion has it and most of us only have the overcoats thus far. The casque (helmet) is used by practically all the French troops now to help protect the head from shrapnel and "spent" bullets. They are no protection against "unspent" bullets unless they hit at such a large angle that the metal could possibly cause them to glance off. The casque weighs about 2½ pounds.

The new khaki uniforms are a great deal better made than are the old gray ones. The overcoats are a bit heavier in material and weight and much superior to the gray. I feel much more like a modern soldier now,—more American.

I don't know whether it would be safe to send the 1915 diary back by mail now or not. It *might not* pass the censorship board. I think I'll send it to Truchet, the propriétaire of the hotel in Paris, and let him put it in my suitcase. I hope it won't be a very long while before I can *carry* all my things back to "home and Mother"—the dearest there

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ever was. It won't be any time in advance of next fall though even if peace negotiations should start somewhere early in the Summer. Peace negotiations take months and especially will those of this world-wide scrap. I guess, even if the war does terminate this year of grace, it will be well into '17 ere your "hopeful" comes sailing home.

'Twill be just a year the evening of the 13th of this month since that said "hopeful" walked in on you at Norristown on his way back from Washington, D. C., and informed you that he was on his way to France. The following morning he bid a mighty quiet but heartfelt farewell. The 20th he sailed and here it is a whole year later!

The Austrians have sunk another ship with some U. S. citizens aboard and after I supposed the trouble between the two countries was over when Austria said she would punish the commander of the submarine which torpedoed the *Ancona* and promised to pay indemnity for the American lives lost. And still the "notes" continue to circulate—nothing more—on the part of the U. S.—but Austria and Germany still continue to laugh behind Uncle Sam's back and murder his peaceful innocent citizens unhesitatingly.

It's getting toward "taps" so this lengthy document must necessarily be brought to anchor. A world of love to you, dear little Mother from—

Your loving "hopeful" in khaki,

EDMOND.

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January 18th, 1916.

DEAR LEAH,

Christmas chimes and New Year bells have long since finished ringing. When this reaches you it will doubtless be half-way to Easter-tide. How time flies!

To-day's paper brings unfavorable news for the Allies. Montenegro surrendered sans condition yesterday to Austria. Will Servia go next?

So there is no skating at Macy's pond this season? That is unfortunate because Law's always was a long walk and never seemed to me to be half so nice. I don't suppose the Hudson has frozen over yet enough for skating. About the last thing I did at Ossining last January was to skate one morning on the river. There isn't a sign of even cold weather here in this part of France. Nothing but rain, rain, rain, 'most every day. It doesn't sound very agreeable, does it?

On account of being at the front we could not enjoy a very merry Christmas or New Year. New Years was better than Christmas simply because it is a great deal more celebrated in this country than is Christmas. The soldiers celebrated it as freely as was possible. The day following proved that, for every one was feeling a bit *dull* under the scalp.

The day before yesterday we moved back to the interior and will go still farther before the end of the week. I doubt whether we shall be again at the actual front, until Spring is well advanced un-

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less, of course, les Boches start something before then which seems unlikely from present observations. Practically all the heavy fighting is being done by the Russians (who are to be lauded for their splendid drives) and in the much-torn and trampled Balkan States. They certainly are getting their share of the mauling.

The other day I read in the paper here of the new giant caliber guns being installed for the defense of the Panama Canal and the important points of the east and west coasts of the States such as at Sandy Hook, San Francisco and other points. They surely are huge, being of 400 millimetres. I'm glad to see the States are wakening up to the necessity of national defense. It's almost beyond time for that.

There's yet another bit of interesting news recorded in the Paris journals several days ago. It is that "Teddy" Roosevelt is running for the presidential chair on the G. O. P. ticket and that is great news to me. This year's campaign bids well to be one of excitement and immense interest. Three cheers and success to "Teddy," shout I. Now maybe you won't write to me any more if you don't want to vote (? ? ?) for him. I never thought of that before I started to rave. Please forgive me!

Henry Ford didn't give the world peace for a Christmas gift and should it come by Spring (which it won't) it won't be because of the efforts of that new-sprung pacifist. By the way, I saw one

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of his tin-can autos here the day before yesterday. 'Twas a friendly sight.

Vive la Paix! It's all right to sing "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," but I want to *shout*: "When Johnnie comes marching home!"

Au revoir maintenant et bien de choses à tout le monde.

Sincerely,

EDMOND.

January 19th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

On account of never receiving the letter I wrote on Oct. 3rd you ask me to give an account of what we did at Champagne, so I'll begin at the beginning and endeavor to make it as interesting and consecutive as possible. Arriving at the environs of that section of the front about the first week in September we marched into an amazing hustle and bustle of preparation for the intended drive. We detrained just east of Châlons-sur-Marne and marched several kilometres toward the front the same morning before dawn, camping for the day to eat and rest at a newly installed camp of concentration. There we came into the first rush of mobilization for the attack. The routes were jammed to overflowing with huge auto-trucks, wagons and automobiles carrying food and other supplies to the troops and tearing back to reload. Day and night they kept it up. At night they ran practically without lights, as much as possible, for security against

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hostile aero scouts and distant batteries. It was thrilling to see those huge, powerful trucks rushing along the roads at almost breakneck speed,—dark, terrible symbols of the serious business before us. It seemed uncanny, weird, unnatural. The large bodies of troops were always moved at night and kept well under cover as much as possible in the daytime. Invisibility at all times of modern warfare is of the utmost necessity,—in concentrating for an attack as much as in the actual fighting. We couldn't even smoke when marching along the routes at night for fear some flying aeroplane or scout balloon observer should discern the many tiny sparks that, though seemingly small and insignificant in one, would surely be counted in hundreds should smoking be permitted at such times.

Leaving the camp of concentration that same night we marched to a town called Suippes and thence to a woods about three kilometres beyond and nearer the front. The country all around there is made up of many large plains with here and there small wooded parts which were admirable hiding-places for troops. There we camped until the morning of the 25th, about a two weeks' period in which we were served the necessities for the coming fight—new clothes for old if required, masks for protection from gas, the metal helmets and many other things including the extra ammunition; 120 rounds is ordinarily carried per man and 250 for actual fighting. The latter is no light load. The last few nights of those two weeks we dug "leaders"

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to the trenches for the passage of the extra troops. The earth there is composed of chalky limestone and is very hard to dig through. We had to dig the leaders sufficiently wide for the portage of the wounded on the litters too—about six feet. Digging almost all night required sleeping practically all day which we did with joy and relief. Each squad slept in a tent. Each soldier carries a light square of canvas which, when buttoned with several others, forms an excellent tent for as many men as there are squares used. When not used to form a tent these canvas squares make excellent waterproofs.

The night before the 25th our colonel read to us in the dusk the order from Gen'l Joffre for the attack. The Division Marocaine was to be in the first reserve. The Colonial Division made the attack. Long before dawn on the 25th we marched to our position just to the rear of the first French line, to the west of the little village (then a mass of shattered ruins) of Sompey, amid a drenching misty rain. We had light loads in our sacks and plenty of cold rations in our musettes (food-bags). The bombardment of the German trenches before the charge was terrific. The German line looked like a wall of fire and hellish flames from the bursting shells. The batteries of both sides made the world sound like Hades let loose. From the sharp crack of the famous French 75's to the deep roar of the aerial torpedoes it was an incessant Bedlam. About nine o'clock a French aeroplane flew right

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over our first line, circled around and back. It was the signal for the French batteries to cease shelling the German first line and for the Colonials to charge. They did, and nobly too. Taking the German first line, with a vast number of prisoners, they forced the Germans back to their reserve lines. Then it was that we began our advance in their rear as reserves. Passing through the leaders toward the old French line we passed scores of captured wounded Germans. Some of them, mere boys of 16 to 20, were in a ghastly condition. Bleeding, clothing torn to shreds, wounded by ball, shell and bayonet, they were pitiable sights. I saw many who sobbed with their arms around a comrade's neck. We passed French dying and wounded being hurriedly cared for by the hospital attendants. Blood was everywhere and it was simply sickening. The smell of powder filled the air and to me it is one of the most disagreeable odors we encountered with the exception of what came later—that of decayed bodies of horses and mules and even men, left unburied for whole weeks. That is too horrible for more than mention.

We followed up the Colonials and passed part of the late morning in the captured German trenches. They were battered beyond description and filled with dead—mostly Germans. German equipments lay thrown everywhere, discarded in the flight. Many German wounded could be seen making their way painfully to the rear. I remember one poor fellow who must have been totally blinded for he

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walked directly into the barbed wire and had a most trying and painful time to get out. It made me sick to watch him. I turned away but couldn't find anything more cheerful to look at. The Colonials who had been killed in the charge lay in ghastly wrecks before the German line, the sickly death pallor of their hands and faces in awful contrast with the pools of blood about them. The wounded were being carried back as fast as possible. The German batteries continued to shell all around us all the time and it was interesting to watch the big shells burst in the rear and send the dirt and rocks far into the air. One burst directly in a body of cavalry on one of the roads. It was horrible!

About two o'clock we began to advance under fire behind the Colonials and then it was that I had about the closest shave from death in all that month. Our section had to advance over a ridge and we must have been seen by a battery which was sending shells of 320 mm. caliber into the advancing Colonials. Somehow we felt that huge shell coming; how, I don't know, but we all just threw ourselves flat into the mud. If I had been one little hundredth of a second late I wouldn't be telling the tale now. I felt that monster hurl directly over my head; the intake of air raised me at least an inch out of the mire which I was gripping with every finger and with all my might. The shell burst not more than three yards behind me and killed four of the section and wounded several others. My heart had one of the quickest jumps of

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its life. I thanked God then and there for His mercy and He must have heard me, for no other shells came our way though they kept bursting to our left among the Second Regiment in endless numbers. Just behind the Second was a battery of 75's which had been rushed up at the advance and they were barking away at a terrific rate. The sight of the dead lying about was awful. Most of them had been literally torn to pieces by the exploding shells. The sight of one will never pass from my memory. A Colonial was in a sitting posture against a small embankment. There was an expression of agonizing terror on his features, and no wonder, for below his waist he had been blown to shreds. One of his feet, the only thing recognizable of his lower anatomy, was lying several yards in front of him. I think we all shuddered as we passed.

We continued on our advance until darkness set in and lay all that night in a drenching rain in watery mud. Sleep was practically impossible. Shells were dropping around us every few minutes and anyway the horrors of the day just closed were too awful to allow pleasant dreams or even sleep to follow. All night the cries of the dying could be heard. I felt as though I were in some weird nightmare. I wish it had been, for then I could have awakened and found it to be only a dream. As it was it was a grim reality.

Just after we arrived at that place, when darkness had set in, was when Dave Wheeler showed his coolness. There was a false cry for us to charge

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and the Third Company, in which he was, started forward with bayonets on. The Commandant of the Battalion, seeing the mistake, jumped in front of the advancing and excited men and tried to check them. One of the sergeants of the Third helped him and Dave, cooler than the rest, did the same. The check succeeded and Dave told me afterward that the Commandant asked who he was. The Commandant found a soldier's death directly in front of Dave on the 28th in our attack. Early the next morning I tried to find Dave and couldn't and so was very afraid that he had been killed in the previous day's advance.

We changed our position early that morning to a small woods behind the new French line which the Colonials were holding, and were under a terrific bombardment all the day, being in direct line between the dual fire of a French battery of 75's and one of the German 77's. The German shells landed nearer to us than they did to the French battery. That night our first lieutenant, a fine young man, was instantly killed by a bursting shell. We buried him where he fell like any other soldier.

Being out of rations, several of us had to go nearly six kilometres that night for new rations for the company. You can imagine how tired we were when we got back and it was raining again which didn't help sleeping a bit.

The following day we moved farther back to another woods, but here we got into a worse bombardment. We lost men there every day. To protect

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ourselves as much as possible from the bursting shells we dug individual trenches into the ground just large enough to lie in, but many a poor fellow merely dug his own grave for they are no protection should a shell fall directly into one on top of the occupant. It was hell and nothing less. That day I found Dave and felt much better for it. I guess he did too for that matter. That was the 27th—only the third day of the horrors.

The 28th (it will live in my memory forever) brought no excitement until the middle of the afternoon. Then we were ordered to prepare to depart for the attack. The Colonel had chafed over continually being in reserve and had personally asked the General in command for permission to put the Légion to the front attack. His request was granted. The first and second companies of the First Battalion and the third and fourth of the Second Battalion were to take the advance. The other two companies of each battalion held the reserve. Ahead of us the Arab Tirailleurs made two strong charges and both times had to fall back. They were ordered to make a third and, refusing to face again the murderous fire of the German machine-guns, turned in flight. Meanwhile we had started our advance in solid columns of fours, each section a unit. It was wonderful—that slow advance. Not a waver, not a break, through the storm of shell the Légion marched forward. Officers in advance with the Commandant at their head; it inspired us all to courage and calm-

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ness. We met the fleeing Tirailleurs and our officers tried to turn them back. I saw our Commandant, wrath written all over his face, deliberately kick one Arab to make him halt in his flight. Shells were bursting everywhere. One lost his personal feelings. He simply became a unit—a machine.

Crossing a clearing we came at last to a woods just in front of the German line. There we met the decimating fire of the machine-guns, bayonets were fixed, and the order given to advance on the run. A faint cheer rose above the ping-ping of the bullets. Leaping a trench containing the terrified Tirailleurs, we charged. The forward French line which the Colonial troops were holding was still before us. There was a slight pause when we got there. The sections formed into a skirmish-line and, being in the fourth section of our company, the Fourth, I got away over on the left flank. The Third Company was on our right. Everywhere men were falling. The fire was terrific. As I ran for the left with the section I could hear the bullets cutting the leaves and twigs all around me—ping, ping, they hissed as they struck the trees. They came from the front and the left, hissing death in our ranks 'til there were few of us left.

While the woods ended at the French line in front, they extended far beyond on our flank. We leaped the first line where the Colonials were. Their duty was to stay there and hold that line. We charged on, but somehow about fifty metres ahead of the line I found myself alone with one other

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young fellow from my section. The others who had leaped the French line with us were nowhere to be seen. Seeing this, we dropped flat behind a bush, thinking the rest would rush up behind us and continue the charge. The Germans had begun to shell the wood just ahead of us. The din was terrific. Dead Tirailleurs were lying everywhere, killed in those two first charges, ghastly and bloody. There were none of the Légion around us to charge. I turned to my companion and said, "They're all dead here (motioning to the corpses); the section must be behind us; shall we beat it back?" He nodded, stood up and started back on the run. I followed and reached the Colonial line without a scratch. I never saw the young Italian again but heard a long time after that he had been wounded and was carried back that night. Behind the Colonial line I found the two sergeants of my section with half a dozen men. They had retreated before my comrade and I had seen them, and were waiting there for further events. Darkness was falling. I had thrown away my sack in the commencement of the charge and in it were my rations—some bread and a tin of beef—and my tent. I had a mouthful of water in my canteen but nothing to eat. We lay there until after seven and then the Adjutant, the only officer left of our company, found us and the remnants of the Third and our company were gathered together to go back to where we were before the attack. A half kilometre back of the line the Major (the

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Battalion doctor) had five badly wounded men of the two companies and asked the Adjutant to let us carry them back to the field-hospital in the rear. Tents were secured, and with four of us to each tent we carried them nearly four kilometres over rough muddy ground to the field-hospital. You can imagine the agonies of those five wounded men being carried along under such conditions. They stood it far better than I thought they would.

When the Adjutant counted us off in fours to carry them he counted just thirty-one, including himself, gathered there from the two companies of 250 each! I found my little S. American comrade safe among them and heard from a hospital attendant that he had seen Dave crawling off to the rear after the fight with a bullet wound in his leg. He said he had more pluck than any of them. Thus it was that I wrote to Mrs. Wheeler the next day and told her of Dave's condition and not to worry. As it was, she heard from him before she got my note, but just the same I was glad I had written. Brave Dave went down beside his captain, the last of his company in that section, and he saw his captain and the Commandant both make very brave ends.

The thirty-one of us reached our old camp about ten and dropped gladly into our little trenches for sleep. It was raining, there was an inch of water in my trench and I had no tent to put over me. I was soaked through, covered with mud, hungry, thirsty, and thoroughly exhausted but sleep was

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impossible. I dozed and shivered for the rest of the night, thinking of the afternoon's events and wondering fearfully whether Dave was alive and safely on his way to succor. I prayed it was so and dawn brought sunshine and some warmth.

We who were left looked around that morning to see who was there. Old faces were gone. Out of my squad of twelve there were only two of us left. We all had our little accounts to tell. Our Adjutant and the few sergeants left, at the order from the Colonel, got the Third and Fourth Companies together into one. There were, with those who turned up that day, about 120 all told—all that was left from nearly 500! We got soup and meat, a swallow of whiskey and wine, and tried to make ourselves comfortable. It was hard work. I wrote the letter to Mrs. Wheeler and sent it off with the mail clerk. We got mail that afternoon, and a letter from —— cheered me up immensely. The world began to look a bit brighter.

The next day I found some of the Americans in the other Battalion and learned of Farnesworth's death in the attack. No other American was lost in the First Regiment.

October 2nd we were drawn back to the rear to the camp where we were the first day at Champagne. The French were strengthening their position all over. New positions were being established for the batteries. All the counter-attacks of the German forces had failed. The French victory was complete.

We had three days' repose in which time we got

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clothes washed and cleaned, a hot bath, and somewhat rested and reorganized. Then it was that I wrote to you the letter which never got through.

Our work at Champagne wasn't over as we had hoped. We returned to the reserve lines and moved about from one position to another all the first half of October. At this time the French were just beginning to assemble and bury the dead around the old German line which had been taken on Sept. 25th. It was a horrible sight—those grotesque forms, stiffened as they had fallen, glassy eyes still staring from their sockets. Eden Musée contains no such horrors as those still forms presented. They were identified by the metal name plates which every European soldier carries (it contains his name, matricule, and date and place of enlistment) and buried in large common graves. Gradually the horrors disappeared into memories. God knows these are bad enough!

From October 13th to 17th we were in the first line and under bombardment practically the whole time. Every night we dug an advance trench and the second night the Germans discovered us. They shelled us for over an hour and all we could do was to hug the earth in the newly begun trench and let the shells burst and roar about our ears. It isn't pleasant to be shelled when there's no protection of any account to get behind. It's bad enough when there is some protection. It was in just such a plight that poor Joe Lydon was wounded a couple of weeks before. His battalion was in the first line and he was doing guard duty one night with his

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corporal and two or three others in advance of the line. The German batteries opened up and, when the shell which cut off the lower half of Lydon's right leg burst, the rest ran back to the trench for cover. Lydon, wounded, had to brave it out, expecting every second to be killed by some shell. Finally he managed to crawl slowly back and was dragged over the trench wall by his comrades and hurried to the rear and thence to Châlons-sur-Marne to a hospital there. He certainly fully deserves the Médaille Militaire which he is getting.

October 17th we were relieved by the 170th Régiment d'Infanterie to which most of the other Americans had changed the preceding week. We marched back all that night and so relieved and glad were we that our time at Champagne was at last over that we sang and whistled almost the entire march, tired as we were. Toward dawn we camped in a woods a few kilometres south of a town called Coverly. We were there three days getting fixed up. All had a good hot bath, washed their clothes and cleaned everything up. Late in the afternoon of the 20th the Division Marocaine et Coloniale entrained at a small place east of Châlons-sur-Marne and Champagne with its horrors was left gladly behind. Thus ends my tale, dear Mother, and from it you can see something of the horror and tragedy of modern warfare. May it soon come to an end. We all want the taste of peace to return to our hungry hearts. That of war is too bitter.

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God bless you, dear little Mother mine. I don't wonder you felt so lonely on New Year's day with your kids so separated from you. How I hope we may all be together again before this year ends!

From my last letter of the 16th you will know that your package reached me O. K. with only a shirt, pair of gloves and the candy gone.

It's time to turn in so must close now. With all love, Your loving son,

EDMOND.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
January 27th, 1916.

MY DEAR RIVERS,

. . . We have been, and for that matter, are, very much on the go. For the past two weeks we have been moving back from the line and are now within a short day's march from where the Division is to have three weeks' or a month's manœuvres with, I understand, some English recruits. If the latter proves to be so it will be some fun for us Americans.

Enclosed is a photo of the squad I am in which we had taken early this month near the front. Yours truly as you can readily notice hasn't gotten thin over the war thus far in spite of all he has encountered. Vegetable soup twice a day, plenty of exercise, a big sufficiency of meat, wine and bread is the excuse. Think of it!—the "kid" even smokes and drinks now!

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I have numbered the occupants of the picture and on the back written their nationalities. The Swiss hold the majority. Number 6, the S. American, speaks English and has been with me ever since I first reached the front last March.

. . . . . .

Mother's package finally reached me about two weeks ago with the box of candy, one of the shirts, and one of the pairs of gloves missing but as long as the rest of the things were O. K. I can't kick over the loss.

The sweater which Uncle Lock. Mackie and some of the others in N. Y. sent reached me several days ago in excellent condition. It's a dandy and a mighty useful addition to my outfit. I feel pretty well fixed now with comfortable clothes to wear. Our company has received the khaki overcoats and jacket but thus far not the trousers. Those will come shortly. They are mighty good. The pictures enclosed show us with the overcoats.

News has been received lately that at least five or six of the Americans who changed last Fall to the 170ème Régiment d'Infanterie are either dead or else prisoners of war as that Reg. was badly shattered several days ago when the German attacked and took the trenches it was holding. Two or three of the fellows luckily were in Paris on permission at the time and thus are safe. The rest—we can only surmise their fate. I'm glad I didn't change when they did.

. . . . . .

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We'll probably get out to action around March or early April. It is very evident that the French and English are going to open up with a rush and a roar then and the few of the Légion Étrangère who will be lucky enough to live through our next drive will come back with glory and undoubtedly will enjoy the peace celebration as well as life later. There have been about forty-eight thousand volunteers for the war in the Légion since the conflict began. There are about five thousand left for service now and so you can easily guess how many there will be after another drive—like we enjoyed last Fall.

In the village in which we were staying yesterday they gave us a special service at the church in the evening. I went in and listened to the pastor give the men a mighty strong volume of praise. The Légion has had its knocks and its glories in this brief year and a half of war. Peace *may* be only six or eight months away but before peace comes there may not be much of the Légion left.

Mom wrote that Uncle Clair had written to the Dept. to find out about me. I am waiting anxiously but *serenely* for his result. I know what it will be.

Best wishes, dear Brother, and love from

Your loving brother,

EDMOND.

Am enclosing also a photograph of a gun crew of a French mitrailleuse, a Hotchkiss. Every regiment has its quota of mitrailleuses.

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February 16th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

. . . I had a lovely letter from Mrs. Lloyd. She spoke of your letter to her. Among other things she wrote was that little Ricka, ever since I asked her to pray for me, in one of my letters, has put into her prayers *every* night "And please, God, bring Edmond Genet safely home from war." "Surely," writes her mother, "God will answer that prayer," and surely He will, say I also. Little Ricka must be a very patient little girl.

Thus far nothing has come from Uncle Clair in regard to the Dept. I am looking for a letter every day now though I know he will not have heard very quickly in response to his request.

"Preparedness" is having a big fight all through the States now as well as in Congress. I had some Phila. papers of early January sent to me by an American in Paris and there were some articles in them about the contest. I'd like to know all that is going on about it as it interests me not a little.

Where we are staying just at present there is a family of refugees from Flanders,—or rather the wife with three little youngsters and an older daughter. One's heart goes out to such homeless victims of the early tragedy of this war, Mother. So many of them are throughout France now—trying to make both ends meet! One knows that the father and perhaps a brother or two are either of three things: dead, in forced military service under the German hand of power, or heroically giving their *all* in the service of their gallant young king.

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February 28th, 1916.

Yours of the 7th reached me a couple of days back and I've been trying to get in time enough between guard and sleep since to write this.

We are out on the line and, from all appearances, will be here for some weeks to come. Just before we were hurriedly ordered out I was within two days of leaving for my permission to Paris and then, miserable luck!—we came here and now I understand all leaves are suspended for as long as we are on the line and my looked-for pleasure is days in the future. I had hopes, up to to-day, of getting off sometime this week but now I feel sure that won't be possible.

Chaplain Pearce says he gives this war three more years unless the Allies hit it up pretty strong —far more strenuous than they are doing now. Russia is doing splendidly but over on this front most of the hitting is being done by the Boches. Three more years of this and, if I live through it, I'll be a fit candidate for an asylum!

I wish my next letter to you was to be written in Paris but I'm pretty certain 'twill be scribbled right here and several others to follow also.

With best wishes to all and all love from

Your loving *third*,

EDMOND.

I am one of the battalion signallers now as I knew the signal code used and they put me in. It isn't *quite* as exalted a position as a general but still it's something.

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March 3rd, 1916.

DEAR RIVERS,

Our regimental flag was decorated to-day with the Russian Cross of St. George by the general of the Division for our work at Champagne. It was decorated last Oct. 26th with the French Croix de Guerre by President Poincaré for the same thing.

Have you by any chance read or heard of us Americans who have enlisted here in France for this war being disfranchised by the Amer. Gov't for disregarding the neutrality and thus being denied the right to vote? I heard yesterday in an indirect way that such was the case. I simply cannot believe it. In that case the Embassy or Consulate in Paris should notify us and first give us a chance to get out of the service here and thus escape disfranchisement. I have written to Dr. Wheeler to see if he knows anything about it.

Late last week I was within two days of getting to Paris on a 6 days' permission, but on account of the activities of the Boches at Verdun all permissions were suspended temporarily and thus far haven't been started up again so I am still in mighty strong impatience waiting.

We were out on the first line for 6 days lately and it was pretty wet and sloppy as the first two days there was quite a blizzard and then the snow melted and rain fell in considerable quantities so that by the time we came out for repose we were picturesquely soiled and wet—besides being decidedly sleepy. Aside from several short bombardments we

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had a fairly quiet time. One afternoon when I was on guard a shell fell directly in front of me but failed to explode. There are lots like that but naturally my heart hit the trail for my mouth for a few brief seconds. We had the joke on the Boches because they learned that the Légion was opposite them and, having weak troops in that secteur and supposing that we were there for an attack (you see what a name we have) they put in reinforcements and fresh troops but by that time we were on our way to the rear! Guess they had quite a scare.

The Boches sure have been driving hard in the east around Verdun. They lost about 75,000 and gained but three or four kilometres. Trop cher, ça!

Nothing has come from Uncle Clair yet concerning the N. Dept. and I am watching every day for a letter from him. I know though it will take quite a while to get a response from the Dept.

I understand Wilson has declared he will write no more notes to Germany and intends to take immediate strong action if they sink another ship with Americans aboard. I think Germany wants us in this conflict, Rivers, so now they surely will torpedo an American vessel.

EDMOND.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
March 6th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

My last letter of the 28th was written from the

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trenches. We made our sortie on the 1st for repose—covered with mud, wet, tired and bedraggled. During the first two days there was quite a hard blizzard. The following days were intervals of rain and sunshine which did away with the snow to such an extent that everything under foot was soaked and running mud and water and by the time we came out we all looked like part of the slime itself. I made a chilly bath and changed and washed clothes at the place we stopped for that night and slept like a log afterward.

Your letter of Feb. 13th came this afternoon and how relieved and glad I am to know that my account of Champagne did really reach you without being nabbed or censored for I certainly believed that such would be its fate. I've no doubt that it was very interesting to that old Civil War veteran and also will be to the Colonial Chapter. You may think a lot of it is exaggerated but I beg to assure you, dear Mother, that such isn't my ability—to make up. There was really lots I forgot to put in which might have added to the interest but never mind now. I guess 'twas gruesome enough as it is.

I am still waiting impatiently for my leave to Paris. On account of the German activities at Verdun all permissions were suspended and I am now wondering fearfully whether I shall get off before Dave and his wife decide to sail for the States.

(There's a cunning little puppy trying to lick my face while I'm writing this and he just planted his

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dirty little paw on the other half as you can see by the smudge.)

I enclose a charming letter I received from an American who lives in Paris but has gone to Nice for a time and invited me to spend part of my leave there with her. You see the French government sends free all the permissionaires to wherever in France they wish to go for leave so I could go to Nice for four days and then to Paris to be with the Wheelers four more days and my time of travel would not be counted as actual days of leave, but I have thanked and told —— that, owing to my acceptance to be with Dave and Mrs. Wheeler and the fact that I am not sure when I shall get the leave (she may have returned to Paris ere I get off on leave) I feel that I must decline her generous hospitality. It surely was a temptation to say yes though, for I know how beautiful the Riviera is at this season and what a pleasant time she would give me.

Mr. and Mrs. Guerquin asked me to stay with them also but I had already accepted the W.'s invitation so had to decline. I also know a Miss Harper whose father, once in the Légion, is a prominent Amer. lawyer in Paris and she has asked me to spend half of whatever Sunday I may be in Paris with them,—luncheon, then going somewhere in the afternoon and dinner afterward. She and —— have sent me books, magazines and different things quite a number of times and written very nice letters as well.

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How wise of you, Mother darling, to plan a visit to Ossining after the D. R. Convention in May to see all the old friends and be with Rivers for a time.

Supposing that you will wonder what the bag-like object fastened to my coat-front in the photo is, I may as well tell you that it contains the mouth-respirator and goggles for protection against asphyxiating gas. We carry it everywhere—even when 10 kilometres behind the actual line.

With lots of love to you, dear Mother, and best wishes to all,

Your loving son,

EDMOND.

P. S. The two little notices enclosed of a sergeant and a captain in the 356e Rég. d'Infanterie may be some of my relations over here. The notices are citations for the Croix de Guerre (military medal) and what they did to be thus decorated. Notice that both belong to the same reg., so perhaps they are father and son.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
March 26th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Your adventurous son, in spite of his poor French, etc., has found a very interesting and a rather likable position in the signal corps of the regiment and I have some hopes that he may find his way into the brigade corps ere many weeks. You see

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I was able, fortunately, to profit from my previous knowledge of signalling in the U. S. N. to show my ability and make good here and I feel a bit satisfied over it too.

There seems to be quite some excitement going on along the border of Mexico between the U. S. troops and Villa's army.

'Twas just a year ago when I got to the front the first time. That was at Cappy—on the line and about midway between Péronne (east) and Amiens (west); Frise is just north of it on the line, so perhaps you can locate it.

The offensive is about over around Verdun, but a big attack is expected in another part of the front here,—a second big offensive by the Germans and we are in readiness for them with all eyes open. I'm sure we'll be in this one for fair—or foul. May we have a large share in ending it all for good! That would be an honor "bien acquis." Watch the papers carefully but the excitement will probably begin before this reaches you.

These last few days (with the exception of yesterday which was fine) have been both rainy, snowy and cold—altogether disagreeable. We found it rather sloppy weather for digging trenches in but that's part of the "game" of war. To tell the truth I have had less than a tenth of the trench-digging so far that I expected to have when I came over. That isn't anything to be sorry over though, is it? Just from keeping my two eyes well open and collecting the knowledge securely in my head

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I've learned lots about field fortifications and trenches and battery positions, etc., in this last year here. Maybe it will all come in mighty agreeably handy some time in the future—for my own country's benefit. Experience certainly is the best instructor after all's said and done.

March 28th, 1916.

Have just received this P. M. your letters of the 5th and 8th and am considerably startled to learn of my having been wounded with the Legion at Verdun. That lively correspondent who put that particular bit of information in the paper would thoroughly comprehend my health condition and physique if I had him here with me now—I'd make a complete surety of that. You will certainly have learned, from the fact that my letters written after the date the paper reported me wounded, which naturally tell nothing of such a calamity, that it is all bosh and rubbish and will not be worrying until this particular letter reaches you. That fact gives me considerable relief for I certainly don't want you worrying over me and especially over false reports.

Had I been wounded you certainly would have heard from me or from some source such as Dave, for I'd do my best to get some news through to you.

As we haven't had any dealing in the least with the Boches at Verdun I cannot very well write any experiences for the Paris papers to that effect. As for ever being a war correspondent—well that's a

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questionable question of a future date but there are lots of better jobs on the market.

That article you enclosed about the through naval vessels which included my former floating home is quite an interesting one to me. The Navy Board isn't doing a rash thing to put those three on the back seat. If they'd only keep on and put the rest of the back numbers on the shelf and build a fast battle-cruiser in the place of each they'd begin to have somewhat of a modern sea-fighting force—one that might attain some real respect and consideration from the other world-powers.

Spring is coming with a grand rush. The early wild flowers of the season just carpet the woods and this morning I found the first violets peeping forth in the grass beside a tiny stream. Periwinkles (we had a small bed, you remember, beside the old home and dear old Dad liked them so much for his Sunday button-hole bouquet) grow quite wild here and they are spread in beautiful masses all through the woods beside the early white wild strawberry buds. All the trees are breaking forth and budding, particularly the cherries and apples. Old winter is taking a breezy farewell of this war-devastated land.

The day's mail leaves shortly so to get this off I must close right now.

With best wishes to all the good friends and relatives and a world of love to you, dear patient little Mother, Your loving son,

EDMOND.

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Roosevelt Hotel, Paris,
Easter afternoon (April 23rd, 1916).

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Your French youngest surely had fortune favor him this time; Good Friday was an exceptionally excellent Friday this year for on that day I left the front for my long hoped-for leave and here I am with Dave and his wife spending Easter, 1916, in brilliant but war-saddened Paris. I only knew I was due to leave on my furlough the evening before I left and spent the time between guards (we were in the first line) to pack up and clean some of the mud and muck off my uniform which was a sight from being in the muddy, sloppy trenches.

Arriving in Paris about 5.30 P. M. Friday I stopped to get my valise at the Moscou Hotel and then came straight out on the subway to the Roosevelt where I was enthusiastically welcomed by Mrs. Wheeler and she saw to getting a room for me. I tubbed and put on decent underwear and a shirt and collar and then enjoyed my first appetizing meal I had had for five and a half months. Dave sleeps at a barracks in Paris but has leave every day, so is only absent nights. He and Mrs. W. are simply lovely, dear Mother. I've only been here barely two days now and have enjoyed every minute of it. They both asked me to give you their very best wish and to tell you how much they are enjoying and are pleased to have me here with them, but I know they can't feel quite as strongly appre-

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ciative as I am to be so splendidly treated by them. Mrs. W. calls me her adopted son.

I never expected to be so fortunate as to spend Easter here, for from the way the permissions were lagging along I reckoned it would be well into May before mine would be forthcoming, but here I am and mighty thankful and jubilant over it, too. Saturday (yesterday) I did some shopping in the morning and then we all three went to the "movies" in the afternoon. In the late afternoon I went to Colombes-sur-Seine and found the Guerquins mighty surprised but very, very glad to see me and had supper and spent the evening. It's not far but the trolley-lines quit running at 8 every night so one has to come back by train if he overstays that hour.

This morning I attended early Holy Communion at the American Church of the Holy Trinity and then went to the regular eleven o'clock service at the other American Church on rue de Berri. The latter is the one which sent me the things last Xmas and seems to contain a far more sociable lot of Americans than the first. I thanked Dr. Hyatt, the pastor, for their kindness as soon as the service was over.

This afternoon we took a walk down-town and saw the Easter crowds which, considering the war, were crowds indeed. One sees the uniforms of all the Allied nations here on the streets and boulevards. The sight is quite brilliant. A great many wounded soldiers and officers are here in Paris also.

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One sees sombre colors as a general rule on the feminine portion of the crowds. Bright vivid holiday gowns are very, very exceptional. As Mrs. Wheeler remarked the crowds in Paris seem more like German crowds than Parisian for the very fact that practically every one is so quiet and sombre. Black gowns and frocks are the rule rather than the exception for there aren't many who haven't felt some loss in these past twenty-one months of conflict.

The gardens and parks and grounds with their flowers and trees, statues and fountains, and shrubbery are very beautiful now that Spring has opened up the buds and leaves and flowers. To-day has been very fine and clear—a fact very unexpected for yesterday, Friday, and most of the preceding days of this month have been very *April* days—showers most of the time. We were all mighty glad to find Easter so glorious and pleasant.

My leave is up Friday morning. I take the 9.30 train back—but don't let me write of going back when this is only the second day. 'Twill come all too quickly as it is,—"let us eat and be merry," n'est-ce pas, chère Mère?

I enclose two post-card views of the Roosevelt. It sure is great to sleep in such a comfortable place and in a genuine bed once more! I slumbered like a bat in the daytime these last two nights—Heavenly bliss! ! !

As I said before we were in the first line when I left and we will be there again—or will the day

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after I get back—in all probability. We're not in a very dangerous sector. Just the same I had spent but a bare two hours in sleep during 60 hours previous to my leaving on Friday morning so you can imagine how tired I was when I finally hit the soft white covers of my amiable bed on Friday night here at the hotel.

I'm glad to hear of Rod's new find in the question of petite femininité. I'll have to send him a few teases.

How I hope yours has been a happy Easter, dear Mother! I've been hoping that ever since I turned out this morning. Mine has been far lovelier than I ever expected it would be.

With every bit of love to you and best wishes to all,

Your loving son,
EDMOND.

This morning I bought a bouquet of carnations for Mrs. Wheeler for Easter. She seemed very pleased. I wish I could do more to show my gratitude to them than I can at present.

Roosevelt Hotel, Paris.
April 24th, 1916.

CHÈRE ÉTOILE,

There! You see how fortune has beamed upon me this time! I got my permission on Good Friday and spent that excellent day in the voyage to adorable Paris. (Gosh what a pen this is!)

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Spending Easter here was a pleasure I never expected to enjoy but my leave came due exactly at the right time for that and here I am.

Can you make out this script—the blamed pen is scandalously a failure—more like a quill toothpick than a pen.

I am visiting two good friends, a Dr. and Mrs. Wheeler (the doctor was in the Legion with me until last Sept. when he was too seriously wounded to continue service and is now being medically discharged), and they are giving me a mighty fine time. My leave expires next Friday but that is too miserable a fact to think or worry over and I'm forgetting it for the time being anyway. 'Twill come all too soon as it is.

The Easter throngs were very interesting. We took a stroll along the boulevards in the afternoon and enjoyed watching the crowds immensely. There are officers in the uniforms of all the Allied nations and they made the crowds bright and gay-colored, for as a general rule here now the feminine portion is rather sombrely dressed. Paris is not the live and gay city it is in times of peace. Black gowns are almost the rule instead of the exception and every one seems quiet and saddened. Small wonder for that too when one considers the awful losses of these past 21 months of conflict. There aren't many French homes which have not met their loss and sorrow.

Wounded officers and soldiers are all about the city—many such pitiable sights too. One sees

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blind or lame soldiers being led carefully along. It stabs one's very heart,—there are so many.

This is a beautiful time to be in Paris for spring has opened out all the trees and flowers and the gardens and parks are simply glorious in their colors and brilliancy.

The piano at the hotel has found a very affectionate friend in me. It surely seemed a relief to run my fingers over the ivories and sound the old familiar chords again. How glad I'd be to have you here to warble some of those old songs for me! You wouldn't have to be asked twice, would you, Star? Of course not!

When I passed the wonderful opera-house yesterday my thoughts were of you and I said to myself: "There's where J. H. is going to startle Paris some of these days." Oh, I've got high hopes for you, dear Star. There's nothing like aiming high for then the shot will surely hit away above the middle.

I do hope you all spent a glorious Easter. I'd have sent you flowers, you know, but couldn't find the kind I know you like. I was looking for *carrot tops!* Don't get mad now, chérie, I didn't mean that, you know.

Now isn't that like a man? There's an amazingly pretty girl writing at the other desk in this room and I just can't keep my eyes from roaming in her direction. She *won't* look! Isn't that horrid of her? There! She *almost* did! There now—I'm neglecting you and that's decidedly impolite, but—I only looked for a minute so you won't care,

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will you? Paris is so chuck-full of fascinating bits of feminine ruffles and lace—and blackened eyes, rouged cheeks, and bewitching carmine lips. A poor chap like me with a uniform on has to get quite dizzy dodging them all, don' cher know? It's really deucedly trying, bah jove!

Some of the English officers with their fashionable uniforms and strappings and their canes and their aristocratic airs do give me painful giggles at times.

This must be quits until my next, Jeannette. I can't afford to miss the delightfulness of this glorious day—or that already shortening furlough.

Best wishes to the family and considerable affection to yourself.

Ever sincerely yours,

EDMOND.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
April, 1916.

"There's that old 'phone again, Jeannette, do answer it!"

"Oh, hang it all, Ma, I'm busy."

At 'phone:—"Hel-lo? H-e-l—lo? Who's this?"

Tiny, faint, far-away voice: "Hello, hello, is this Halstead's?"

"Yes, but please talk louder."

"This is Genet, Edmond Genet in France. Who's that?"

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"Goodness gracious, Edmond! This is Jeannette. Where *are* you, Edmond?"

"Bon jour, Star, I'm in France. Just called up to chat a bit with you. Lord, but it's great to hear your musical chirp again!"

"Well, if you aren't the nerviest! Why, you're not really in France, are you?"

"Sure I am, adorable Star, I'm at the front, too, just in rear of the first line. But we'll have to talk fast as I haven't got *more* than a mint of money to pay for this call."

"You've taken all my breath away, Edmond. I can't talk."

"Well, sing then, Jeannette. I'm absolutely gone, I know, but c'est la guerre. I swallowed a German shell last night and it has gone to my head. Say, Star, sing me, 'Juste un peu d'amour,' you know that."

"Silly boy, I haven't got my notes and the piano is in the next room."

"What's that?—Gee, Star, central just told me the bill's up to 50 dollars now. Guess we'll have to ring off pretty soon—but aren't you going to send me a kiss?"

"Horrid thing!"

"But say, dear Star, let me tell you about that permission I was thinking of getting to Paris this week."

"Well?"

"I've got a month to wait yet as there are quite a number still ahead of me. I'll get it some time

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in May if the permissions aren't suspended again before mine is due on account of other probable Spring activities. Isn't that rotten luck? Now I'll miss visiting Dr. and Mrs. ——, my friends there, who asked me to stay with them. They will probably sail for the States by May first. It's mighty hard to keep a rein on my impatience but I guess I'll have to do so a few weeks longer.

"Oh, yes, beloved Étoile, how is the play progressing? I sure wish I could be there to accept that offer as your manager. You're a mighty hard proposition to manage though, I'll warrant that. How I pity your poor hard-laboring Dad! 'Her First Assignment!' Hump! I hope it won't be your last, Jeannette. Let's hope it is the début of a brilliant starry future. That's the right way to look at it, isn't it?

"You didn't say anything about a salary in connection with that managership. What do I get out of it if I accept? It's a mighty prominent job and very difficult to fill, so the salary should be pretty large. Besides I want a dollar Amer. beauty rose in my buttonhole every day. That has to go with the salary."

"Nonsense! A violet will do just as well."

"Stingy one!

"Jeannette, here's one for you—

'Give me a sly flirtation,
By the light of a chandelier,
With music to play in the pauses
And nobody very near.

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But, being poor, we must part, dear,
And love, sweet love, must die;
Thou wilt not break thy heart, dear;
Neither, I think, shall I.'

"How's that,—but don't take it seriously for I couldn't bear to part with you, wonderful Star."

"Taisez-vous, silly boy, how you do rave!"

"I know, Jeannette, but it's in the blood. Our kitten acted the same way when it was young. We're having real Spring weather now—showers, showers, showers, and then some more —— —— ——? showers, naturally, Miss Inquisitive. This A. M. it even called quits and snowed a few showers."

"He, he! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you giggling at, Jeannette? You can't see my face.

"Lord, that 'phone bill is mounting to boiling-point, Star, dear, so we simply must ring off. I'll call up again from Berlin *when* we get there."

Faint voice in 'phone:—"Au revoir, Edmond."

"Hello, you there still, Jeannette? Au revoir jusq'à une autre fois—au revoir——"

Click!—connection's broken.

Yours sincerely, EDMOND.

République Française.

Roosevelt Hotel, Paris,
Thursday, April 27th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

This is my last day here this time. I have to take an early train out to-morrow morning. The

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permission has been altogether delightful. Dave and his wife have been just lovely to me—doing everything they could to make my visit as pleasurable as possibly it could be. I have just come in with them from having dinner down-town in one of the swell hotels.

Monday night a young American newspaper reporter who is at the hotel (he was reformed from the Legion some while ago because of a wound), by the name of Rockwell, took me to the theatre—a musical review at the Folies Bergère. It was excellent.

The days since Easter dawned have been delightful—even a trifle too warm for any real hustling. I have simply had a lovely furlough in every way.

This morning, among other things, I stopped in at the office of the *New York Sun* and introduced myself to Mr. Grundy, the head there. He has heard of me and I of him through one of the other fellows in the Legion and he was very pleased to see me. If you or any one ever has a necessity to cable to me you can, if you wish, cable to him and he can arrange and forward the message quite quickly to me. He offered to do the same for me if I ever had to cable home.

Enclosed is a pretty good likeness of your French "poilu." I had it taken this time and was able to get them finished by this morning. They only cost me three francs the dozen, which is about sixty cents and quite cheap.

To-night I hope to get a last and excellently sound

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slumber in a real bed before going out to-morrow where Heaven alone knows what's in store. There ought to be a violent French offensive at least by next June if not more likely in May. I've been pretty fortunate in getting permission before May because I feel confident that the permissions will be suspended before May is well along—perhaps for nearly all Summer too. The war may not be over before next Fall—if then.

The U. S. Army attaché is staying here at the Roosevelt. He is a Captain Parker and very pleasant. I met him through Mrs. Wheeler the other night and he plied me with questions as to our life in the Legion.

My next missive will be from the front. I wish I had about a week more here, but these six days have been sufficiently fine to pay up for all past waiting, so I can't kick.

With best wishes and love to you and all,

Your loving "poilu,"

EDMOND.

Régiment de Marche de la Légion Étrangère,
1er Bat., 4ème Cie.
Secteur postal 109, France.
May 9th, 1916.

MY DEAR RIVERS,

To-day, one year ago, the Legion made one of the most brilliant and successful attacks at Arras and so this is a sort of fête-day even though we are on the line. Of course, being with the 3e de Marche of the Premier Rég. at that time, I wasn't

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in that attack. It was the 2e Rég. which carried off that honor. The 3e de Marche was much farther south at that time.

Your news concerning my Champagne letter sounds mighty encouraging. I sure hope you *have* been able to place it and for a really creditable amount too. I'm sure it will never bring anywhere near 300 but it ought to bring between 10 and 75. I'm waiting to hear definitely about it to determine what you can best do with what it brings. You can judge best, knowing the quickest what it brings, how much to send me. I suppose I could have made it mighty "yellow" if I had done what one other Amer. fellow, who deserted after the Champagne affair and is now in the States, did. He made himself a big hero by putting in a lot of things he or the Legion never did at all and his story was decidedly and vividly "yellow." Perhaps you have already read his article, for a friend in O writes me of having read it. I simply put down what we *did* do from start to finish in that campaign and my personal feelings and impressions from what I actually saw and did. There's no fairy-tale in it anywhere so it's not as "yellow" as it would be if there was.

. . . I simply won't ask any girl to become engaged to me until I'm able to marry her almost directly afterward. I can't believe that I have any right to ask a girl to tie herself up to me as a fiancée when I'm not in the position to marry. If she isn't going to wait when we're not engaged, then

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she isn't going to wait if we are and I'm not going to ask her to do so either. Am I right, Rivers?

. . . . . .

There ought to be exciting things occurring along this front before July. I only hope the next six months will be one awful, wonderful Hell—that we'll drive the blamed Boches back to where they came from and then they'll cry "Camarade" in such earnest that we'll be celebrating le jour de la Paix by the end of October at the latest. There ought to be some hard driving before that much-loved peace comes anyway. I only wish I could face the Boches under the Stars and Stripes instead of the Tri-color, but,—will I?

The very best of luck, dear brother, for the future. I know how mighty discouraged you are but things just can't continue as they are now forever. Luck has got to come. Best wishes to all the good friends.

Your affectionate brother,

EDMOND.

May 20th, 1916.

I haven't much time to write now but will scribble a few lines.

. . . . . .

Kindly notice the girdle around my waist. Only the glorious Legion wears that. It's four yards long, a very pretty light blue, and we *wind* into it. Out at the front it isn't worn much for reasons of

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convenience of our own. The best way to *wind* into it is to put one end around a convenient tree and turn 'til it's over and you're rather dizzy. Some class! The metal helmet weighs about 5 kilos.

There's a rifle inspection at hand so I've got to close and shine up the *wife*. If I do say it myself I've got one of the best-looking and cleanest rifles in the company and she has seen 15 months' actual service au front. I believe in *complete preparedness*.

All best wishes and regards to every one.

Your loving brother,

EDMOND.

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FRANCE

AVIATION—THE ESCADRILLE LAFAYETTE

1916–1917

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Roosevelt Hotel, Paris,
May 31st, 1916.
A. M.

DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Stopped here overnight and part of to-day on my route to Dijon where I join the French *Aviation* Corps as pilot (élève-pilote). I haven't time now to go into particulars. I'm *out* of the Legion for good after a long long struggle to get this transfer through—ever since last summer. I'll write particulars from Dijon and send you my new address as I don't know it yet. I may be at Dijon only a few days.

. . . All love and best wishes.

Your loving son,
EDMOND.

Roosevelt Hotel, Paris,
May 31st, 1916.

DEAR STAR,

Stopped off here last night on my way to the French Aviation Corps at Dijon. Have just transferred from the glorious Legion to the Aviation Corps. I go on to Dijon this afternoon.

Wish me all good luck, Jeannette. I'm in the best branch of the service now and going to "make good."

Faithfully yours,
EDMOND.

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Camp d'Aviation, Buc,
June 5th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

My letter from the Roosevelt at Paris on May 31st should be a big surprise for you for that will be the first news you will receive that I have even been trying to enter the French aviation corps, let alone being actually in it. I had been trying, through every possible source, ever since last October and have only kept it to myself and the few good friends over here who have helped me do it because I wanted to surprise you all if I did succeed and I hardly expected to succeed anyway, which, had that happened, would only have disappointed you as well as myself. Well, I'm in now and to-day arrived at the camp here to begin studying to fly. That ought to take me from three to five months of good, earnest, steady work and I'm in to "do or die."

I officially entered the aviation corps the 22nd of May but the papers were delayed, etc., so that I didn't even know of my success until the 29th, when the orders came to the Legion for me to leave for the aviation depot at Dijon the next morning. My happiness at that news I can't describe. It seemed all like a dream—too good and sudden to possibly be true but it was, dear Mother, and my long hard service in the Legion came to an end the next day. Another fellow from N. Y. by the name of Chatkoff who has been in the Legion since the start of the war was changed at the same time and

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we met and have been together ever since. We stopped off at Paris, as you know from my letter, on our way to Dijon and I saw Dave and Mrs. Wheeler and some of the others. We left for Dijon that afternoon getting there early the following morning. I would have written from there but we were too busy getting fixed out the thirty hours we were there. Last Sat. noon we were sent away to come here to Buc (only a short distance from Paris) and we had to go through Paris to get here so stayed over Sat. night with Mr. and Mrs. Guerquin and yesterday was with the fellows. Sun. night I stayed at Truchet's hotel.

Dave and Mrs. Wheeler sailed on Saturday, so of course I couldn't see them yesterday. I hope you see them some time somehow after they arrive.

It was an under-secretary in the French office of Foreign Affairs, a Mon. de Sillac, Dr. Gros, head of the American Ambulance, Dave, and various others who helped push me through to this. I saw Dr. Gros when I was on leave in April and he was extremely amiable, said he had heard about me, and helped me make my 2nd demand to the Minister of War for my transfer. It needed a big effort and plenty of high influence to get out of the Legion. That was our chief obstacle but, thanks to Dr. Gros and de Sillac, it was overcome.

Now I'm at the aviation school at Buc and expect to begin, earnestly and whole-heartedly, within a day or so.

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My address is, until further notice,—
Edmond C. C. Genêt, Élève-pilote,
Franco-American Escadrille,
1e Groupe d'Aviation.
Camp d'Aviation, Buc.
France.

Probably I'll be sent around to several different aviation camps before I'll get through training and get my brevet (pilot's certificate) but letters will always be forwarded to me no matter where I am. I expect to be here for at least three months anyway.

I sent a cable yesterday through Mr. Grundy, of the *N. Y. Sun*, to Uncle Clair for him to please cable me fifty dollars. I simply must have that much to get fixed out with a uniform, shoes and other necessities of wear and use. We get fitted out with everything necessary for flying, but we have to buy our own uniforms, shoes, etc. I also need to get some sort of a suitcase or bag to carry my things in.

There are ten of us here in Buc. Actually at the front with their brevets are about twenty, with five or six others at other training camps so we're 35 in all. Lots of fellows have come in from the Amer. Ambulance, a few from civil life, and about half are, like myself from the Legion or the 170th Reg. There's one mighty fine young fellow by the name of Beal from Pa. and Washington, D. C., who got into the French cavalry early last year. He is, next to

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Dave, the best one I've met over here of the Amer. fighters.

I've got to pay for all letters I write to the States now—five cents apiece so that's going to be a nuisance as well as an asset to my expenses. I do get paid a franc more a day here at the school than I got in the regular service but that isn't much. Please don't believe though, dear Mother, that I'm going to hit up any pace now as I'm not. I've just got to have some money to get decently installed and the returns later should far more than pay for the outlay now.

This is the most dangerous branch of the service, Mother, but it's the best as far as future is concerned and if anything does happen to me you all surely can feel better satisfied with the end than if I was sent to pieces by a shell or put out by a bullet in the infantry where there are 75 out of a 100 possibilities of your never hearing of it. The glory is well worth the loss. I'd far rather die as an aviator over the enemy's lines than find a nameless, shallow grave in the infantry, and I'm certain you'd all feel better satisfied too. We won't look for trouble though, dear little Mother, yet.

If you can circulate my address among some of the friends I'll be much obliged as I'll not be able to write as many letters now as I did in the infantry service. A little notice in the Ossining *Citizen* or the *Register*, if Rivers can put one in, might be good to show my friends there where I am now so they won't write to me to the Legion.

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There's lots of possibility that all we Americans serving here in France will get 48 hours off over the 4th of July and be given a big banquet by the Amer. Chamber of Commerce at Paris. We're all looking forward to it and the American newspapers there are planning to help us get it. There ought to be a mighty big lot of us—many more than there were last year. Last year, as it was, we of the 1st Regiment got there 2 days too late to attend the banquet on the night of the 4th. It will be far better planned this time so that shouldn't occur.

We have very comfortable barracks here and I guess we'll be O. K. for the rest of the time—here or anywhere—in the aero service. One meets the best class of fellows in this branch and we're appreciated for being what we are,—*gentlemen, Americans,* and *aviators.*

Wish me all luck, dear little Mother, in my new work. It means lots to me—perhaps my whole future and I'm in to *win.*

École d'Aviation Militaire de Buc,
June 8th, 1916.

MY DEAR RIVERS,

You will learn either from Mom or Uncle Clair of my change to the aviation—before you get this. That memorable date was, by strange coincidence, on Memorial Day (May 30th). I could scarcely believe the good news for, though I had been trying to get transferred ever since last Fall, I hardly expected it was possible on account of the difficulty

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in getting out of the Legion on any pretext. That is one reason I've never said anything to you all in my letters. The other is because I wanted to surprise you if I did change which I rather guess I have succeeded in doing,—surprise you, I mean. Well, I'm at last where I've wanted to be and I ought to be a full-fledged pilot aviator, if all goes well and good luck keeps with me, within four months.

I certainly am mighty well contented to be out of the Legion. I can't say much against it but compared with aviation it's decidedly back in the shade. Aviation is far more dangerous and all that, but it's well worth the risks and, as I wrote to Mom, I'd far rather be killed as an aviator than as an infantry soldier and you all would feel far better satisfied too. Besides that if I am killed you'll be certain to know about it very soon if not immediately afterward, whereas were I killed in the line service there are lots of chances you'd never hear a thing about it.

This is by far the best branch of the service. The rewards are great and we're treated with respect and plenty of consideration. Besides, the best class of men are to be found here and that means a great deal.

All the Americans are together in what is known as the Franco-American escadrille d'aviation. Of course there are many now at the front but they are all together. There are about twenty doing actual service at the front and about fifteen still training. Ten of the latter are still here. I'm one of those. Six of us all began last Monday. The other

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four have been here a few weeks. We're treated finely here, have excellent quarters, the food is good and, except for the uniform and other personal clothes which we buy ourselves, we're fitted out extremely well.

The Americans are pushed along as rapidly as possible. We're sent direct here to begin actual flying instead of being held at the aviation school in Dijon to learn more thoroughly about the motors. I was there only a day and a half to get fitted out and photographed, etc. The course here ought not to take more than four months and then we'll take the test for our pilot's license after which we'll be sent to another school—probably at Pau to finish up with target shooting with the mitrailleuse on the aeroplane, etc., after which we'll join the others at the front. I don't think the war will be over by the time or before we have a chance to get a crack at the Boches from aloft. Now that I'm in aviation I don't care much when the old scrap ends. I want the experience now before I have to quit and return to the old U. S. A. This may mean my future, Rivers, and anyway it means further to me than the duration of this war.

We have to turn out at 3.30 every morning as flying hours are from 4 to 8 A. M. and 4 to 8 P. M. All other hours we have to ourselves. Of course the weather counts mostly on the work, for no flying is attempted here at the school on too windy or rainy days. Accidents are too frequent, as it is, on good days.

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What will, or rather how will any of us ever get along in the service of the States after the war, with Germans and Germans as officers over us? That's *some* proposition, isn't it, Rivers?

Dave and Mrs. Wheeler sailed for the States last Saturday. I sure hope they meet no "U"-boats. 'Twould be miserable luck to Dave if, after going through all he did over here in the bloody Legion, to be pulled under on his way back by a German submarine.

École d'Aviation Militaire
de Buc, France,
June 9th, 1916.

MY DEAR ROD.,

I'm as happy as a lark and mighty well contented to be out of the famous Legion though I haven't much to say against it. The Legion was fine,—it's the best regiment in France and one finds fine companions there (rough, of course, on the surface, with the exception of the Americans and English, but true just the same), particularly Dave W., but infantry life is away in the shade alongside of the best service going,—aviation. This is what one can call the real thing. This is sport with all the fascination and excitement and sporting chances any live fellow could ever wish for. This brightens up the future, it means something after the war and, as I've told Mom and Rivers, if I don't get through then at least you'll all know about it at the time and you'll be better contented with the result and I'll earn a far more glorious end than I

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ever would in the line service. Of course there are lots of chances of being shot or hanged in Germany if any of us American daredevils ever are so unfortunate as to fall into their hands alive, but even that is a glorious death. The Boches certainly have it in for us and particularly the American volunteer flying corps. The fellows in it who are at the front have done too splendid service against them for them to feel amiable toward any of us. I'll bet anything that the Kaiser has issued an order for a special form of death to be doled out to us if we're caught.

My official farewell was taken of the Legion on May 22nd but I didn't know anything about it until the order came on the 29th and I hiked out early the next A. M. (some Memorial Day for me) with a merry heart, met Chatkoff, another Amer. from N. Y. who has been in the Legion since the beginning of the scrap and who got his order to change the same time as I did, and we left for Dijon but managed to stop over most of the 31st at Paris, and then we continued our journey to Dijon that night. We only stayed there until noon of the 3rd to get signed up, etc., and then we came back with two other Americans, Dowd (Legion man and later in the 170th but wounded at Champagne and just over his convalescence when he changed to the aviation) and Beal, from Pa. and in the French cavalry for 11 months (one of the best chaps I've met over here) to Paris, stayed there until Monday noon and then came here to the aviation school at Buc.

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We'll be here from three to four months, I judge, although the Americans are liked very much and are pushed along as rapidly as is possible. We stay here anyway until we earn our brevets (pilot's license) and then there'll be a month or so at Pau with target practice with the mitrailleuses in the machines we're to use at the front, and after that —the front,—a place we're all very anxious to get to as soon as possible.

We only work here from 4 to 8 A. M. and 4 to 8 P. M. The rest of the time is completely to ourselves for sleep or anything we may wish to do. It's far, far from being like the Legion where one is usually lucky if he gets six good hours' sleep out of every twenty-four. "I love the cows and chickens but this is the life, this is the life—" A great deal, too, depends on the conditions of the weather here. We don't attempt to fly unless the wind is very slight and there's little or no rain. Of course that won't be so after we get our brevets but while we're élèves we go carefully. I'd hate to break my neck here at the school after sixteen months at the actual front with the bloody Legion, but more than one fellow has done so here while an élève. Just two or three days before we arrived two machines crashed together in the air here and one élève was killed almost instantly. This is no favored sport when it comes to risks by any means. Wish me good luck, that's all, Rod.

Must quit now as it's time to go out for work. Write and tell me I'm a nervy fool for I'm afraid I am.

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P. S. Give my best to that black-eyed dream of the South. Don't tell her what a reckless, untamed brother-in-law she'll get or she may get alarmed and perhaps think you have a touch of the same disease. It can't be hereditary unless there's a streak from some great-great-great-, etc., etc., grandparent that somehow lodged itself into my system, for dear old Dad was never thus. N'est-ce pas?

THE KID.

École d'Aviation Militaire,
Buc, S. et O., France,
June 17th, 1916.

ADORABLE STAR!

This is the life! The school here (only a short distance S. W. of Paris and therefore a decidedly convenient situation) is one of the preparation schools of aviation now running in full force under the régime of government. I expect to be here from three to four months before I get my brevet (pilot's license) and then there'll be two or three more months of advanced training at three or four other schools before I become a good enough aviator to risk a valuable machine with at the front. (An aviator's life is but a secondary matter. Lives are easily replaced in war times whereas machines are expensive articles to lose.)

There are eleven of us American scamps here at the school, several others are training elsewhere and about twenty more are on the front and doubtless you have already heard and read of their

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splendid exploits around the Verdun battle front. They've done wonderful work. We're all members of the Franco-American Flying Corps and all mighty proud of it too.

We're all looking hopefully forward to a glad blow-out over the Fourth of July in gay Paris. We expect a 48-hour leave for the happy occasion and I'm saving up the coin to get a bad headache for the *Fifth!* Oh wandering and imprudent youth, why dost thou thus? ! ! ! Never mind, like Christmas, New Year's, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving, Birthdays and all the rest, it comes but once in every twelve months, Sundays included.

I've only half smashed one machine so far and so have an abundance of hopes and expectations for the future. This is sure a fascinating life.

Must fermer now as the bugle just croaked for hittin' the hay. I blow you a good-night kiss, Star dear, and you can't slap me for it *neither*. Bon soir. Yours affectionately,

EDMOND,
Élève-pilote.

École d'Aviation Militaire,
Buc, S. et O., France,
June 20th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Your letters of May 16th, 24th and 30th have all come this month and it's high time I recompensed you with an answer. The one of Decoration Day came to-day. Though you will know by now, you

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didn't know, while you were writing that, that your wild "third" was with Dave and Mrs. W. that day and the next, seeing them for the final time on this side of the briny bubbles and also was on his way from being a hardened légionnaire to become a merry aviator. How often you all must wonder—"What's he into now!"

Do you realize, Mother, that no one over here has been told by me of my real method of getting over here? I may have been very wrong in keeping all that to ourselves, in never telling Dave or Capt. Parker or any of the fellows from the States, but I could never decide convincingly enough that telling them would help. No doubt in Dave's case it would have—perhaps in Capt. Parker's also; but I've only known him since Easter time when I was introduced to him and his wife by Mr. Wheeler. Now Dave is in the States and if I do tell him I can only do so by letter. Will that be right or, if you see them, or Rivers, would it not be better for you or him to tell them? Every time an article comes out about me such as this last one written by Rockwell (which, by the way, is a surprise to me entirely) it simply cuts into me like a knife, over the fact that they do believe I quit the N. O. K. and print it that way. . . . Do such things go through the Sec'ty of State, which now is Lansing? I believe they do. Is it best to wait until this is all over and I'm due to return or have gotten back? Somehow, against lots of hard reasoning, I can't believe that is the best plan. "R"

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won't be President so there isn't that advantageous mark to count on later. If he was the chief executive there would be lots of hopes I feel sure. I'm getting thoroughly distracted over the whole affair. I could get a commission right now in the Vol. forces of America if it weren't for that. There are lots of things I have been forced to let go and lots of things I will have to lose on account of that. That is one of the main reasons why I am almost convinced the matter should be taken up now.

Have you ever mentioned in your letters to Mrs. Wheeler my situation? They've never said anything to me about it but I thought perhaps you had and they never wanted to say anything to me about it as long as I kept silent. I'm afraid I was blamed blue that last Sunday I was with them, May 31st. Mrs. W. noticed it and tried to get the reason out of me. I think she thought I was love-sick or some such nonsense but I wasn't. I was feeling mighty miserable over that blamed secret and also the fact that I felt it was the last time I would ever see them clouded over my cheerfulness considerably. I don't know why I should have felt that latter, but I did, dear Mother.

If anything should happen to me over here, Mother, it would be so much easier to meet if I knew I was O. K. with my own loved country. I'm afraid that is an impossible privilege though. The only thing which ever impressed me about the burial service is the question, "Oh Death, where is thy sting?" I know now that it would hold

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its sting for me if I met it with that blot upon my record.

The flying is progressing fairly well though slowly on account of a too large class. It keeps us from getting much more than two trials a day—sometimes less.

There's lots of danger of being radiated, that is, dropped or "canned" from the aviation while at the schools. Only about 40 out of every hundred are allowed to go through—the very best, of course—so one has to keep mighty well up to the chalk-line and watch out for accidents, etc., if he is desirous of continuing his career as an aviator. I most assuredly *am*.

July 8th, 1916.

That was funny about the missing first page of my letter for it certainly wasn't my fault, I'm sure. I can only believe that when the censors examined it they must have left out the first sheet by accident. They seem to keep whole letters from me quite frequently from what I can tell. That's far worse.

The Fourth wasn't as much of a holiday for us at this school as we expected it would be. We were only let off from eight that morning until working time (4.30) in the afternoon to go into Paris to attend the memorial service held at the Amer. Church of the Holy Trinity for our first Amer. aviator killed at the front, Victor Chapman, of whom you no doubt have read in the papers lately. The service was short but very nice and practically

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all the American colony of Paris attended. Also most of the aviation fellows and the Amer. Ambulance chaps were there with the Ambassador and Consul-General and their respective staffs. Following that most of us attended the usual 4th of July ceremony held at Lafayette's grave in the Picpus Cemetery. The latter was very interesting and impressive and the Speeches excellent. Chapman's name was linked with that of Lafayette and the bond of good feeling between the sister republics was very strongly and excellently expressed. . . .

You ought not to worry about my forgetting my Church duties. I attended early Communion at the Amer. Church the Sunday before last while I was in Paris and last Sunday, being the first one of the month, I attended the regular morning ceremony and had Communion after. No, dear Mother, I'm not the kind to stay away from Church whenever I have an opportunity to go. I may even try to go in some Sunday mornings, when I can't get any longer leave, simply to go to Church. I'd very likely get permission for that very easily. It's only a short half-hour's run on the electric railway from Versailles (Buc is just a little ways from Versailles) to Paris, and I can get off at a station which is only five minutes' walk from the church.

You can feel sure now, Mother, that whatever may happen to me in any way that the Franco-Amer. Flying Corps will take good care of me and notify you immediately. 'Twill be far different from my being in the Legion where you might never

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get any news of me at all. Dr. Gros has been most friendly to me and I'm doing my best to be polite and decent to him. He shook hands with me at the Church on the morning of the Fourth and, because I had gone around to call on him at his residence the preceding Sunday (unfortunately he was out of town then) to thank him for helping me to enter the corps, he seemed very pleased with me. I've got another very good friend in Captain Parker. His wife is very pleasant also. She wanted me to dine with them at noon on the Fourth but I had to decline.

Your loving son,

EDMOND,
Élève-aviateur.

July 18th, 1916.

If I wasn't so forgetful about birthday dates I certainly wouldn't have neglected yours; but I am, and so, dear Mother, you'll have to accept my affectionate wishes for many more birthdays to come now instead of when they should have come—on the 25th or before.

Your letters reached me and I waited to reply only until after I had made my confession—for confession I did make last Sunday. No, I'm not a Catholic now nor did I confess to a priest. I'm referring to the confession I made to Capt. Parker of my coming over here, etc., etc. I tried to see him twice during the previous week by securing leave to Paris and finally, after missing him both times

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but seeing his wife the second time (the Fourteenth, which was Liberty Day in France) I received an invitation for dinner with them at the Roosevelt where they live for Sunday noon and then I did see him and made a straightforward and complete confession of my wrong-doings. He was mighty good about it and proved himself just the good friend I believed he was. He has given me excellent hopes for the future, Mother dear, not only in being able to clear myself and get that black blot erased, but for a big chance in the U. S. Aviation Corps when I get back. Capt. Parker assured me that my clean record before I came over and the bigger clean record I am making while here ought certainly to be very much in my favor when the time comes to clear up the bad part, but he advises that I await all action until I am finished with my service over here and assures me that if I return after two years' absence I cannot be held for punishment. That is vitally important. When I get back which will surely be after Jan. 8, 1917, anyway (that is the 2-year mark) I had best go straight to the N. Dept., give myself up, and with my continued clear record of service clear myself that way and get reinstated in the service—only in aviation instead of the former. Meanwhile Capt. P. is writing to a N. friend and indirectly getting advice from him as to a better or best course to pursue. He is being awfully fine to me and insists that I come to him at all times for advice and help, take a meal with them any time I may get

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to Paris and consider him my best friend over here which I am only too glad and grateful to do. I'm mighty, mighty glad that I did do the straight thing and went directly to him with my case. It was a big relief to get that load off my conscience.

When I first got in last Sunday I went to Church, and then to see the Parkers.

There was an enormous and very stirring parade in the morning in which practically all the Allies were represented by their crack troops, but I missed seeing it by getting to Paris at noon after it was all over. The troops received a tremendous ovation, especially the French (they always do) and the Russians and also the Scotch with their "piper" bands.

Your loving "third,"

EDMOND,
Élève-aviateur Américain.

August 9th, 1916.

I am piloting the 50 h. p. Blériots still, but expect to be put on the 60 h. p. ones either to-morrow or the day following. The weather has been excellent for flying lately and I have made short flights practically at every dawn and sunset lately. As soon as I get on the 60 h. p. machines and do a few flights with them (they are not much different from the 50 h. p.—only a little more powerful) I hope to do the required hour at 2,000 metres or over, and thus get rid of the first requirement for my license. Then

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I go to the Caudron biplanes and three weeks with those ought to fix me up to do the required three triangular voyages of 240 kilometres each. If I get through those O. K. I'll be a full-fledged military pilot and you, dear Mother, can understand how much that is going to mean to me. I've got a very creditable record at the school thus far, thanks to the kindly Providence, but there's no telling whether the good fortune will continue to the end. I can only hope so.

August 14th, 1916.

My last letter was written on the 9th if I remember rightly. That was last Wednesday. We've had quite a bit of excitement—rather grim excitement—since. On Thursday I fell in a 50 h. p. Blériot, smashed the machine into match-sticks, and got out of it alive. They carried me back to the school hospital in an auto. I had a jammed left hip, a strained left shoulder-blade and several minor cuts on my legs. If the life-belt with which I was fortunately strapped into the machine hadn't held I wouldn't be writing this now. As it was I got out all right and only spent until Saturday morning in the hospital. I'm still feeling pains around my hip, but can walk almost as well as normally. I had just started up for a flight and the motor went wrong, wind got under my left wing, and I turned around and over on the other one. The machine was completely demolished.

The next day (Friday) one of us met a far more

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serious fate. Perhaps you will have read all about it in the papers before this reaches you. Dennis Dowd, a fellow about 29, who hails from N. Y. and had practised law there for about two years before the war (he came over here at the outbreak and joined the Legion, changed to the 170th Regiment last Fall after the Champagne affair and was wounded there soon after), was instantly killed in a fall from about 500 metres in a Caudron biplane. It is hard to determine how it happened but it's thought that he must have fainted in the machine and thus lost all control. It has upset us all a good deal. Dowd was our star man here, and one of the best liked. He was within two or three weeks of finishing the course here also, which makes it worse. Besides that, he was engaged to a very attractive girl residing near Paris. They were to marry right after the war.

To-morrow morning we are all to go into Paris to attend the funeral at the Amer. Church. The burial is being deferred until his parents in the States communicate their wishes about where he is to be interred.

Such are the chances we all take in this game. It seems such a shame that Dowd, who has been through so much in this war, was so anxious to get to the front with the escadrille, and would have been one of the best pilots there, had to lose his life while in training at a school. Any one of us may meet the same fate though, dear Mother. I would rather find mine at the front while doing my part

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against the enemy. Who can look into the future though?

I went into Paris after work yesterday morning and was at the regular morning service at the Amer. Church of the Holy Trinity. Then I went over to the Amer. Ambulance to see Joseph Lydon, who, I had heard a few weeks ago, had been sent there to have his new leg-stump placed, but they told me yesterday, when I inquired to see him, that he had been sent to St. Cloud to a hospital there, so I've missed seeing him again. I'm afraid St. Cloud is a rather difficult place for me to get to.

Yesterday I bought ——, for her 19th birthday, which occurred in the last week of July, a little silk-and-leather card-case, with mirror, a place for powder and one for change. Don't you think that is a pretty serviceable gift? I had her initials put on the outside also. The store mailed it to her for me.

I thought, from your last letter, that Rod. had already gone to the Texan border. He writes that they may be sent soon. I saw in yesterday's paper that all the remaining militia of the States has been ordered to the border. I'm wondering if that means that both he and Rivers have left for the front.

One of the fellows has just told a very amusing story. One of the French fellows here, while on a voyage with his aeroplane, fell into a tree top. The machine was smashed up and the pilot dropped out and down into a stone quarry below. Some-

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how he caught his feet in part of the tree, and then lost consciousness for a few minutes, hanging there head downward. When he came to the first thing he heard was a cry behind him, "Don't move!" There was a click and, turning his head, he saw a fellow behind him who had just snapped his picture. Then the photographer assisted the pilot to get down safely.

Your loving fils,

EDMOND,

Élève-aviateur Américain.

August 26th, 1916.

Wednesday's mail brought your letter of the 1st. Unless something very unlooked-for and unhoped-for occurs within these next two weeks this will be one of the last letters you will get from me written from this school, as I am in one of the last classes and nearly ready to do the required feats of aviation to get my military brevet. On last Tuesday morning I finished with the Blériot monoplanes by doing a spiral and a few other stunts which weren't altogether necessary, but which pleased the instructors so much with my abilities as a pilot that the Chief Pilot, in placing me with the Caudron biplane classes, allowed me to skip the first class, in which the pupil is taken up for a few trips by the instructor to show him how to pilot the machine, which is heavier and much different from the Blériot monoplane, and thus gets him more accustomed to the new machine, and let me go up alone in the 60

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h. p. Caudrons the first time after explaining how it worked. I did O. K. and was advanced to the 80 h. p. machines the following day where I am at present, though nearly through. One lieutenant and I were treated the same and were the first in the school to go up alone for the first time with a Caudron.

I ought to be doing the required spiral and hour at 2,000 metres this next week and then the three triangular voyages of 240 kilometres each directly afterward and thus end the course at this school and be a real pilote breveté. Then I'll have a couple of days or so of permission to Paris and then go to the next school to become a pilot of the machine I'll use at the front—I expect and hope it will be a Nieuport biplane. It is the best of the fighting-machines and my record here ought to warrant my becoming a pilot of that particular machine, as all the best pilots can become Nieuport pilots and my record is mighty good here thus far. A lot of the Americans who are here could not pilot the Blériot monoplanes, and thus won't have the same chance I have ahead of me unless they make very good later.

If the wind goes down soon we'll fly this afternoon so I must close and get ready. I hope I'll be through here at Buc in a couple of weeks. Love and best wishes to you and all.

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Roosevelt Hotel,
Paris,
Sept. 6th, 1916.

Your eminent "third" is a full-fledged French aviator and also a member of the French Aero Club —likewise by Saturday he expects to be a corporal and is feeling pretty joyful over the record he made out at Buc. Major Parker, who is acting as my delightful host while I am spending these four days of leave (Tues. to Sat. A. M.) has written to you and told you something about my record at the school and the regard the officers there hold for me, so 'tis hardly necessary for me to go into any further details. Besides I am hurried this morning as I want to get out to Buc for a few hours to get some information for the major.

Three very acceptable letters of yours are before me, but I shall answer them *fully* in a day or so—possibly not until I get to the next school which is to be the Nieuport school at Avord.

Yesterday Mr. Grundy, of the *N. Y. Sun*, took Paul Rockwell and me to a dinner, held in commemoration of the battle of the Marne, by the Associated English and French Press. One of the generals (Malleterre) who fought at the Marne (he lost a whole right leg there and got a smashed arm) spoke and was extremely interesting.

My leave is up on Sat. A. M. I go back to Buc to get paid off and signed off, etc., etc., and then leave for Avord.

Boasting isn't my line, Mother, but I can't re-

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frain from saying that I made one of the best records as a pupil at Buc that has been made. The Capt. told me I could be put down as a mighty good model for the rest of my Amer. comrades there.

Oceans of love from

Your loving son,

EDMOND,
Aviateur Américain.

Roosevelt Hotel,
Paris,
September 7th, 1916.

MY DEAR RIVERS,

The next time you write after getting this scribbled note (which, by the way, should be mighty soon after) you mustn't put "élève" before the aviateur Américain and you can put "corporal" in its place. I joyfully passed the requirements for the military license and became a genuine aviator of the Franco-American Escadrille last Sunday. I'm likewise a member of the Aero Club de France and rank as corporal. Some start. Mom will most likely send you the letters Major Parker, with whom I am staying for these days of leave (4), kindly wrote her telling her how well I did at Buc and what the officers there think of me. That will be sufficient to convince you all of my seriousness in this game. The end of this week I go to Avord to begin to pilot the famous little fighting-machine, the Nieuport. I'll be there at least a month. The game is just starting on its

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most interesting phase now and I'm past being a "rookie."

If you have any intentions of running over here for a visit please let me know beforehand. I'm afraid a passport is a blamed difficult document to obtain in these times unless there's a very excellent reason given. Believe me, dear brother, I sure would love to see you.

Division Nieuport,
École d'Aviation Militaire,
Pau, Pyrénées, France.
September 12, 1916.

My dear little Mother,

Instead of going to Avord as I said I would in my letter from Paris last week I found out that the Pau school was much better than the one at Avord, so, with Major Parker, I went to see the Colonel in Paris and got permission from him to go to Pau instead. Yesterday I arrived after an all-night train ride from Paris via Bordeaux and now I am pretty well settled and expect to begin work this afternoon if the weather, which is very rainy-looking at present, permits. I stayed with the Major at the Roosevelt over Saturday night, after leaving Buc that afternoon, and also until late Sunday afternoon. My train left at 6 o'clock. Sunday morning Mrs. Parker went with me to the 11 o'clock service at the American Church. She asked me for your address and said she would write to you to tell you what a *bad, bad* son you have over here. She is lovely, Mother, and both

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she and the Major are being mighty good to me. The Major insisted that I come to stay there with them every permission I may get to go to Paris and let them do anything for me which I may desire. I surely have been blessed with friends ever since I landed in this country.

The country around here is very picturesque, although yesterday and to-day have been so cloudy and rainy that I really haven't yet seen it to its best advantage. On clear days they tell me the Pyrenees, at whose base this country is situated, are very plainly seen. We are in a big, broad valley, but the foothills of the Pyrenees are just south of us and their wooded slopes look very enticing. I am going to try to get over to them on foot or bicycle, and anyway, I shall see them pretty plainly when on flights. The aviation school is fully 8 miles from the town of Pau (Pau is quite a large place) and a little narrow-gauge railway connects the two places. The school is spread out quite a bit and divided into three or four different divisions. The main part is the École de Combat where I shall finish up before going to the front. Now I am in the Nieuport Division where the pupil first learns to pilot a Nieuport, the little *avion de chasse* which we pilot at the front later on.

Our quarters are just as comfortable as those which we had at Buc—wooden barracks which are very well made, and we sleep in good iron beds and have a mattress, two warm blankets, two sheets and a pillow. How is that for army life! I eat

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at a little restaurant near the camp. My pay is a little over forty cents a day.

While I was in Paris on leave last week I had some very good photographs taken and will mail one to you just as soon as I get a supply of stamps of which I am lacking just at the present moment.

German prisoners of war do a great deal of work about the camp here, and I was rather amused at a sign on a pump this morning where the water was drinkable. There was the French notice and then below was one in German—like this:

Eau
bonne à boire

Drinkwasser

The German prisoners all seem pretty well satisfied to be on this side of the lines. They don't speak very heartily of their officers and their manner of treatment either.

As soon as I become perfect as a pilot of the Nieuport I'll be sent to a rapid-fire gun school not far from here to learn how to handle and shoot one. Then I return here to the School of Combat to "perfectionate" on the Nieuport and learn aerial tactics for fighting the Boches' machines. Then I'll do the loop-the-loop, vertical dives, the corkscrew drop, which looks as if the machine was whirling earthward completely out of control, fly upside

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down and vertically and all sorts of other aerial stunts. If I don't kill myself I'll be a thorough aviator and fit for the front. Three American fellows are just finishing that part this week and will soon go to the front to join the others there. I hope I can get there myself within three months.

Best love and wishes to you and all, dear little Mother mine. Take the best care of yourself possible.

Your loving son,

EDMOND,

Pilote-aviateur.

Roosevelt Hotel,
63, Avenue d'Iena,
Paris.

MY DEAR MRS. GENET,

You will be glad to hear that your son has been making a fine record for himself as a soldier over here.

His record in the Foreign Legion was excellent and now he has just passed his examination as an aviator-pilot and his officers speak highly of him. My wife and I have taken him under our wing, and I hope to see him rehabilitate himself by his good work here in France.

You may count upon our looking after him.

Very faithfully yours,

FRANK PARKER

(*Major U. S. Cavalry,*
Observer with the French Armies).

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Division Nieuport,
École d'Aviation Militaire,
Pau, Basses-Pyrénées, France.
September 20th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

My last letter was written to you on the twelfth and I remember I promised then to send you the picture which I had had taken in Paris just as soon as I got into Pau to buy stamps. I went in on Friday last and mailed the picture after which I wandered around the town to see what it is like. Not only is it much larger than I thought, but it's decidedly a very attractive place and extremely well kept and modern, with city-like stores and good hotels. I was quite surprised to find it so up to date. The principal church is a beautiful structure which in design gives one the impression of the famous Notre Dame of Paris, but this edifice, of course, is much smaller and less imposing than the great cathedral which awes all travellers to the French capital. Another chief feature of Pau is the royal palace, a part of which now holds the biggest hotel, l'Hôtel de France, and this is a very striking building with beautiful gardens and fountains and a magnificent view to the southward where rise the lofty Pyrenees between France and Spain. Bears must be plentiful through these ranges because in to-day's paper I read of them coming down very much below their usual haunts and causing trouble among the sheep on the lower slopes around here. Just at sunrise is when the mountains seem most beautiful. They seem very rugged and impressive from here.

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This morning's mail brought me your welcome letter of August 24th. I've had very few letters from the States lately for some reason.

My flying began here on the afternoon of last Wednesday when I started on the 60 h. p. Blériot. I only had a few flights on that and was put on the Morane monoplane which I flew only four times and went so well that they pushed me along to the Nieuport which I commenced to fly last Saturday with poor luck that day as I turned one machine completely over on its back on the ground in the afternoon. I smashed the machine rather badly, but got out O. K. myself. Since then I have had better success and hope to be fairly expert by the first of the month. This morning under bad weather conditions I made seven flights with fairly decent results. Although the Nieuport is considered the best machine to fly it is, in fact, one of the most difficult in many ways inasmuch as there are innumerable little tricks to learn before one can pilot it in the correct style. It is very difficult to land with, for with the least mistake it will turn right over—nose first. So far I like the little Morane monoplane-biplace with an 80 or 110 horse-power Blerget rotary motor, the best of all the machines I've piloted. It is very unsafe, though, in bad weather, and difficult to manage in any sort of a bad wind.

How characteristically thoughtful and dear of you, little Mother, to think of your poor far-away "third" when you came across that diamond of the Citizen! Thank you a thousand times for I appre-

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ciate immensely the possession of such a treasureable relic of the Citizen. I only wish I could be certain that the time isn't far off when I can place it on the right girl's finger, but it looks mighty far off just now. I wonder if the old Citizen would be appreciative of the fact that his namesake, fighting for his own loved country about 135 years after he came to ours, is possessor of his ring? Perhaps he would. History has wrought a very strange coincidence.

Don't be startled over the following bit of information because thus far it isn't at all certain of materialization and even should it materialize it isn't such a dreadful matter anyway. Last week there came a request from the Minister of War for volunteer pilots to go to Roumania to fly there under the French Aerial Corps, but to aid the Roumanian army. I thought it all out from every possible view-point of which I could think and decided that it was a pretty good chance, and so volunteered. It is still too early a date since to expect any response but the chances are I won't be accepted because I still have over a month of training before me—nearly two. At any rate if I am accepted and sent as soon as my training is complete, which ought to be along in the middle of November, I shall have the privilege of having a winter of active service there, which I might not have over on the front because I might be held in lazy reserve all winter in the rear on account of inactivity on the front during the cold weather. Also the chances

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of promotion are very likely quicker and better in service in a foreign country. That certainly proved to be so for the French Aviators who went to fly on the Russian front. They received all kinds of honors and decorations, etc. The mere fact of flying for two countries at the same time is enough to warrant double chances of promotion and decoration, and down in the Balkans all the Allied forces are at work together. There is, too, the big probability of Austria and Bulgaria being completely crushed by next Spring and then I'll have all that experience to back me up and the choice of coming back to fly on this front or of going to the Russian one for the great final setting toward the fall of Germany and the end of the whole blamed conflict. I most likely would prefer to return to this front for the final clash. Last, but not least, is the chance of an interesting and perhaps even an exciting trip to Roumania and the opportunity to study the war as it is down there and pick up a smattering of one or two of those languages down in those heated regions where blood seems to flow thicker than water. The trip would have to be via Russia (reached by water through the Baltic Sea) over Russia via rail to Odessa and thence by vessel to Roumania—a rather lengthy and sure-to-be-interesting trip in such times as these. There's nothing like seeing all of the world possible *sans expense* and that is only one of the minor reasons why I would like to be chosen to go. Do you blame me for volunteering now, dear

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little Mother? I don't think you ought to anyway. Probably by the time I write you next I shall know for a surety whether the War Dept. will accept my good offers or not. I only hope they do.

The enclosed article I think will interest you as well as inform you of the reason I have that cord under my shoulder in the photograph. It is the "fourragère" which we of the 1st Regiment of the Legion won last September at Champagne. I could have worn it ever since then, but only got one this last time I was in Paris and put it on.

Best wishes to all and every kind of love to "ma belle mère" de

Son aviateur fils,

EDMOND,
Pilote-aviateur.

September 26th, 1916.

Your three letters (Aug. 29th and 31st and Sept. 8th) have lately reached me—the last to-day. To-day's mail has brought also the book "The Note-book of an Attaché" from Cousin Eleanor Cresson which you wrote of and I am indeed thankful and delighted to have it. I had heard quite a good deal about it and have wanted very much to read it. It surely is a very good description of the early days of the war and extremely well written. I've already gone through the first chapter this noon.

My last to you was written on the 20th. Thus far no response has come in regard to Roumania and I expect I shall have to wait until well into next

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month to learn my fate about that. Major Parker has written to me and said he thought my reasons for going seemed sound and if I go he will make it a point to present me to the Roumanian Attaché at Paris. I might be fortunate enough to receive a letter of introduction from the attaché to some of the high authorities in R. and thus boost me a little that way.

As you perhaps already know from accounts which already must be in the papers in the States another one of our brave aviators has been killed at the front. One of the very best of them too. Paul Rockwell's brother, Kiffin, has gone this time, —brought down in an aerial duel. Thus it is and will be right along with all the best ones—those who really do the biggest amount of the fighting. We can't help but predict which ones will be killed. This game is only that of *get* or *be gotten* and those who go right into the fray to *get* are almost sure to be killed sooner or later. I'm not going to be any shirker, dear little Mother, even if it is sure to mean what it has meant to Chapman and Rockwell.

I am expecting to go to the machine-gun school at Cazaux on the 3d with the detachment leaving here for that place then. I doubt if I get a permission to go to Paris before then, but intend to try for one after finishing at Cazaux before returning here for the École de Combat.

Just a year ago yesterday we began the battle of Champagne. It all comes back fresh in my memory like a long horrible nightmare—each day

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an added horror. This Thursday afternoon (the 28th) will mark the anniversary of that attack we made through those woods in which ⅘ of our company was wiped out—and your wandering "third" was unfortunately reported "killed or missing." It seems but yesterday instead of a whole year ago.

The Committee of the Franco-American Corps has sanctioned my volunteering to go to Roumania and, if I go, agrees to give me 5 months' allowance in advance as payments monthly will necessarily be out of the question once I get down there. Including my government pay I am getting about 46 dollars a month now as I get 150 francs (about 30 dollars) a month to eat. With shoes and clothes and other necessities and occasional extra *feed* bills, travelling, etc., the rest all seems to go quickly. As soon as my corporal papers go through, which ought to be within a week, I'll be getting 4 cents a day extra. I'll be a corporal by the time this reaches you.

I shall write to Cousin Eleanor in a day or so and express my grateful appreciation for the book. I'm surely not going to do more than *lend* it to any friends as I want to hang on to such a treasure. Part of it was still unwritten when I landed on these shores. The next time I go to Paris I'll leave it with Mrs. Parker to keep for me. She may not have read it.

When I get to Cazaux I'll write and tell you all about it. I understand it is a very interesting place—on a big lake on which we practise with

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machine-guns mounted in hydroaeroplanes and fast motor-boats—using small balloons for targets.

All love and warmest wishes from

Your loving son,

EDMOND.

Aviateur.

École de Tir Aérien,
Cazaux, Gironde, France.
October 10th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

It has made me very, very glad over my success at making a good record at Buc and at Pau just because I know how happy it has made you. I'm trying my best to bring out the best possible efforts and results, and thus far the latter have shown that I've succeeded pretty well. After all it hasn't cost me much effort.

The Captain here very kindly granted us four Americans leave to go to Bordeaux over last Saturday night and Sunday. There are two other Americans here with whom I was at Buc and who went to Avord while I was at Pau. The third is a pleasant chap from Argentina, S. A., who is a volunteer and as he speaks English fluently he is with us. We have been enormously favored by the Captain here. He has placed us together in a group by ourselves under an extremely pleasant young French adjutant who speaks English and thus we learn better. Also, instead of living in the usual barracks of the pilots we have the privilege

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of two rooms used generally for officers' quarters and in the officers' barracks. Two of us are together in a room. It's the best treatment we've had yet in the service.

Instead of remaining at Bordeaux over Sunday I went to Arcachon, a delightful seaside resort very near here situated on a large bay. It is rather late in the season, but the days are still warm and many people were out on Sunday. I went in swimming the preceding Monday—the day I came here from Pau (work here not beginning until Wednesday, there was no reason for staying all that day)—and I found the water delightful but quite cool. I only stayed in a half-hour. I'm enclosing a postal or so of the place. When I got back here Sunday night I found a pile of letters. . . .

My last letter to you I guess was written before I left the Nieuport Division at Pau. I did mighty well and very quick work there—finishing in about 18 days. A detachment of us was sent here on the 30th and as that was a Saturday we all entered here on Monday. I was in Bordeaux on that Sunday and strolled around the town. It isn't a very striking place but contains some mighty pretty buildings and columns.

Yesterday I had a big surprise. Major Parker came all the way down from Paris and arrived here about noon. He got permission from the Colonel at Paris who has charge of the aerial schools to come here. The Captain had him for luncheon and took him all around the school during the after-

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noon and I was with them. The Major said he and Mrs. Parker were very, very pleased with your letter. They both are being altogether lovely to me. The Major is quite sure he can get me off to Roumania or to this front as soon as I am through training and thus save me waiting in reserve for several months. My previous time at the front ought to help me in that as well. I don't like the idea of being held in reserve all or nearly all this winter.

Possibly you don't know where Cazaux is. It is on a large lake, about 9 miles square, situated just off the coast S. W. of Bordeaux. The lake is called Cazaux Lake. The school is on the eastern side and is very comfortable barracks. There are a great many here who have nothing to do with aerial fighting—machine-gun men of infantry and there are also machine-gun men for aeroplanes who are not pilots. We pilots are here to learn to shoot machine-guns simply because we are to fly one-place aeroplanes where we shall have to do everything ourselves—pilot and shoot at the same time. Here we practise from hydroaeroplanes, motor-boats and on ranges on land. It's all mighty interesting indeed. This is the only school in the world where hydroaeroplanes are used in machine-gun practice.

The Franco-American will surely help any of us who need assistance to get back to the States. The corps will most likely *more* than help us back. You see if I have any success at the front in bringing down enemy machines I'll get about $200 for

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every one I bring down—possibly more as the F. A. pays each pilot so much for every medal received and it adds up to quite a bit.

For the past month I've been worrying a mighty big lot over ——. No letter has come and I can't imagine what is the matter. I'm looking and hoping for a letter from her every single day. It's beginning to look hopeless. . . .

I haven't a lot of time here for letters. I've been writing this at odd moments right along to-day. I owe about twenty letters now and some of them for weeks past too.

Do you know that the Captain Parker of whom Eric Wood writes in that book as being one of the military attachés to the Embassy is the very Major Parker I know? It is and he has told me a lot about their experiences during those first few months of the conflict. It was Major Parker who first had charge of the destitute Germans and Austrians in France at the opening of the war, and he was the one who got Eric Fisher Wood his position as attaché at the Embassy when he found what a bright, clever fellow Wood was. The fellow Hall who drove them on that trip after the Battle of the Marne in his own car is now a Captain in the British army in France and I dined with Hall's father and mother with the Parkers in the Roosevelt in July. It is all a long string of strange circumstances which will lead up to what! God knows!

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École de Tir Aérien,
Cazaux, Gironde, France.
October 12th, 1916.

My dear Rivers,

This is an interesting place. We practise firing from motor-boats at small rubber-ball balloons floating in a line along the water, at ranges of from 200 to 800 yards, from hydroaeroplanes using silhouette targets of aeroplanes floating on the surface of the lake and floating balloons (balls) in the air and there's a range for machine-guns on the shore with the lake as the firing-range. The targets in this case are also lines of small balloons at various distances. The shooting from the hydros is the most fun. This morning I tried shooting at the floating balloons, sent up from a small boat on the lake, for the first time and hit four balloons out of only 5 shots fired. We circled around until the balloon was in front or nearly so and then I had to shoot darned quick and judge distance and speed mighty rapidly to hit the blamed thing at all. We were flying at about 100 kilometres an hour. Some sport!

That surely was excellent shooting and a big credit for the "8th" and the Battalion.

If only you and Mother could have come over here this fall I certainly would have been immensely happy but it would have meant quite a sum to you and I guess it's better to wait until you are better off. Possibly next Spring I may be back from Roumania (if I go down there) or else

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here anyway and April and May are the best months to be in Paris. Possibly I can get a few weeks off and run over there. Some of the fellows have done that already—those who have been at the front and it is possible to get the leave I know. I've been planning sort of vaguely in my mind to do that if possible next May or June. That's looking ahead a bit too previously though. There's too much that can spoil such pleasant hopes between times.

In order to facilitate matters, Rivers, I am going to give Major Parker's name as the person to whom the authorities may send notice in case of anything serious happening to me. I have given Mother's name up to now but believe it would be quicker and easier if I give the name of one on this side. Major Parker and his wife will gladly do this for me, I know, and should anything happen will readily notify you and Mother immediately. Please forgive me if I keep speaking of such things but I believe in being prepared as best as is possible for everything which may occur. Should I be killed and my remains recovered there is no use in thinking of my being buried anywhere but in France while the war is going on. Some day, afterward, though, when you are able, I would like to be removed to my own beloved land. Remember that I gave my life for France though, dear brother, and keep the French colors over my grave as well as the Stars and Stripes. Please don't think I am pessimistic for having written all that. One has to

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prepare for death in war-time and I haven't much to ask after all, have I?

I sent you a photo I had taken while in Paris in early September which I hope reaches you all right. I wish I had photos of you and Mother and Rod—late snapshots would be more preferable—but I haven't. Haven't you one you could send me?

When you write again address to
Division de Combat Aérien,
École d'Aviation Militaire,
Pau, Basses-Pyrénées, France
(that's my next stop).

École de Tir Aérien,
Cazaux, Gironde, France,
October 22nd, 1916.

DEAR ROD,

This is my final week here and I feel highly contented over the fact. The place is very interesting, but not enough to last through three or four solid weeks. I've been here ever since the beginning of the month and when I arrived I understood it was to be for only two weeks. Considering that I took but a bare eighteen days in which to perfect myself in piloting the little Nieuport at Pau last month I have felt it rather an unnecessarily long time here to learn three or four mitrailleuses (machine-guns) and practise shooting them. I'm sure, though, that the target practice has done me good and if I'm not a crack marksman I think I can at least hold my own against the average. There's more blamed chance of the machine-gun getting jammed while one is fighting an adversary in the air than there is of doing any crack shooting. If the gun

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jams there's absolutely nothing to do but beat it by dropping head first with the machine for home and the repair-shop. That occurs time and again at the front. I suppose the most chivalrous thing a fellow could do if his opponent's gun jams would be to toss over his revolver and give the other guy a fighting chance that way, but I never heard of its being done yet. The little brotherly feeling that there is in this war exists only between the aviation corps of the two sides, but there isn't an overabundance of that. I wouldn't trust a Boche to throw me his revolver if he saw my machine-gun was indisposed to work for its existence, or if my ammunition had all gone to waste in the air around him,—would you?

The authorities here—particularly the captain—have been just fine with us four Americans who have been here this month. We've had a big room to ourselves instead of having to quarter in the regular barracks with the other under-grade pilots (we're only corporals) and for a time we had a young French adjutant who spoke English to instruct us. He left a while ago to become a pilot, and the captain immediately put us with a group of officer-pilots. The average French officer is an awfully decent sort and we've found the best class of them in the aviation. A large percentage of them are former cavalry officers and you know yourself that the cavalry of any country has the monopoly of the best men as officers—men from the best families. Thus, on account of the cavalry be-

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ing used so little in this kind of warfare most of the officers—in preference to changing to infantry —have entered the aerial service. One of the most gentlemanly officers I have met over here was a captain from the cavalry who was at Buc the same time as myself and he came to Pau before I left. A week after coming here I read of his death in a fall at Pau with a Nieuport. It was unbelievable to me because he was an excellent pilot and extremely cool. Even the best pilots meet their death some time or other. It's so much better to have the end come while one is fighting at the front. We've lost, as you must already know, the originator of the American escadrille—Norman Prince. He died from having had both legs broken in an aerial flight on Oct. 15th. He was in a hospital near the front when he died and very near the end he was decorated with the Legion of Honor. He certainly deserved it. He was on the *Rochambeau* with me when I came over. That was his first time in France when he came to enter the French aviation service. Later he thought of getting the French to consent to forming the American escadrille and he went to America to work it up and get fellows to come for it.

Thus far three have been killed at the front, Chapman, Rockwell, and Prince; Dowd met his fate at Buc, and another young fellow, Balsley, has been in the American Ambulance for months now and will be partially paralyzed for life—if he pulls through at all. There seems to be a fighting chance

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yet for his life. He received an explosive bullet in his stomach and hip-bone. A big piece of the latter had to be cut out. How he ever lived at all is a marvel which can only be attributed to the Amer. Ambulance surgeons.

One of the fellows at the front, Lufbery (a former U. S. army fellow), has 5 enemy machines to his credit now and is, therefore, numbered among the best pilots of the service. When one has brought down 5 enemy machines he is named in the French official communiqués and is one of the "aces" of the corps.

If I last through this war I feel pretty certain that my name won't be "mud" back in the U. S. I think there's still a bit of a glimmer in my lucky star, Rod, and if it will only keep alight I shouldn't get gray hairs over the future. If I get gray hairs 'twill be over the present—while I'm doing my little bit against the Boche pilots. Gray hair don't worry me in the least though. If I don't return banged up in some way no one will ever believe I've been through this racket at all, papers or no papers. I certainly haven't lost flesh over it as you can easily see by my photographs. I hope you have received the one I sent you in early September. Mother writes that she rec'd hers so I suppose you have also. Please pardon the *streak of dirt* over my upper lip. The photographer forgot to tell me to wash it off—poor fool! Rivers is in the dark shade with his kid brother now.

I had a letter from Chas. Rowe yesterday. Says

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he's working in the same firm in N. Y. with George. Takes a 6 something train every A. M. I can't say I'd change places with him or any of the others of our old gang, Rod, even if they are safe over there and perhaps putting a little in the bank every 30 days. I may have but a month or so more to live but by all that's heavenly I'll meet a death that will bring honor to any one and (you perhaps over there can't realize the fulness of the enthusiasm we few American fellows who are over here hold for France and this big cause) the world will know and remember our sacrifice through many a year to come. There are plenty of others over there to jump into the place I might be filling while there are none over here to fill my place at the front. Every pilot counts. No one else will ever fill my place. Those behind will have their *own* place to fill. As I've written to Mother and Rivers you've got to expect me to meet the same fate as Chapman, Rockwell, Prince, and the rest who may go soon, just as I expect it. A pilot can't always win, no matter how broad his streak of luck may be. All we ask is to be able to bring down a few of the enemy machines before our turn comes.

Your devoted brother,

EDMOND,

Caporal pilote-aviateur.

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Division de Combat Aérien,
École d'Aviation Militaire,
Pau, Basses-Pyrénées, France,
Nov. 2nd, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Your letters reached me in the latter part of last month just previous to my leaving Cazaux and I intended to send you a good reply while in Paris spending my leave from the 27th through the 31st with the Parkers, but I never had such a strenuous and delightful vacation over here before. I was simply on the go from start to finish—in fact so much so toward the last that I nearly missed my train Tuesday night by staying at the Harpers' to meet Helen's oldest brother who had just come in on a leave from his work with the field-hospital service of the Amer. Ambulance at Verdun. He's about my age. I just caught the train by offering a cab-driver 10 francs to get me to the station. He drove *some* fast. Taxis are almost impossible to get hold of after six at night. They're all occupied. It's terrible.

Major and Mrs. Parker were just as nice to me as any one could be and I spent a most pleasant time with them. I got around to see nearly all the friends, but I'm getting so many of them here that it seemed an impossible task. The five days went like mad.

In my last letter I told you I was going to see Miss Harper for the first time. I saw her part of every day I was there. She surely is one lovely girl and, though hardly seventeen yet, seems about

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19 or 20. Her mother is delightful and was very good to me. They had me there to dine four or five times and Saturday night Helen and I went with a chaperon to see "Madame Butterfly" in its opening night at the Opéra Comique. We enjoyed it immensely. I had never seen it in New York, so was mighty glad of the opportunity to see it there.

This morning I made my first flight in over a month with a Nieuport and did quite well. It felt great to be up once more. I don't believe much in staying out of a machine too long at a time as one gets a bit nervous about going up again. I was this morning—until I felt the machine leave the ground and then I felt completely at home once more. I bought myself a good warm fur-lined leather head-covering in Paris. It completely covers my head and buttons close up over my mouth. The goggles of course protect my eyes from the wind. I really felt quite warm and snug with it this morning although I wasn't at a high enough altitude to judge it properly—only 600 metres.

Three of us coming down from our leave at Paris rode first-class all Tuesday night and never paid a cent of fare. We had our ordinary order of transport but it only grants a 3rd-class passage. We've always managed to work it 1st class though, so we had a compartment to ourselves and got a good sleep. We arrived in Pau at noon yesterday and came out right after dining at one of the hotels. It seems good to be back here again. The climate

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here is warm and pleasant at this time of the year and I guess the month or so I'll have here will not be too disagreeable or cold to enjoy flying.

A very nice letter came from Mrs. Wheeler written in early October just after they had returned from their trip. They were in Concord and she said they would be there for some time. Dave was trying to secure a medical commission in either the Canadian or English forces and so will most likely be back on this side before long. He certainly has an immense stock of youthful fire and love of excitement. Mrs. Wheeler will have to tie him up to keep him from charging the Germans again like he did in Champagne.

What do you suppose I received yesterday when I arrived here? You know from my last letter that I haven't heard from —— since away back in August and have been fretting my heart out with anxiety over her, thinking she was dangerously sick or something. Well, yesterday came a postal written on Oct. 2nd. She says: "Why don't you write? I scan the papers for news of you and wait for the mails, but get nothing."

Here I've been writing letter after letter ever since August—at least one every week—and why haven't they reached her and if she has been writing all the time the same as usual, why haven't her letters reached me when all my other letters seem to reach their destinations and all letters to me seem to arrive safely? I can't understand it at all. . . . I do hope a letter comes from her

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mighty soon which will clear it all up. I have been absolutely distracted over it all. Here I've written right along and she evidently has also and not one of our letters has been received. What *is* the reason? Why should our letters to each other be held up when none of the others are? There never is anything of military importance in my letters to her and certainly not in hers to me.

An order, I understand, has been passed that any of us Americans can secure a leave to the U. S. of 21 days with travel time in addition and 2nd-class accommodations paid. That's fine, but I've two distinct reasons for not wishing such enjoyments now. One is that I had better keep out of the U. S. until after January, 1917 (you realize why), and the second reason is because I want to get to the front as quickly as possible and do some good work before I ask for liberty to the dear old homeland. I wouldn't feel right to go back without having first spent four or six months in flying on the front even though I have had nearly 2 years of steady service. I'm sure I could get leave now just on account of my service, but I'm not going to ask for it. Next Spring—perhaps about May or June—will be time enough and I'd rather spend that season over with you all than the cold winter. Not that I'm not mighty, mighty anxious to see you all again, dear little Mother, but I want more active service to back me up and I might get in trouble over there if I came back within two years of my leaving. That's the most important reason.

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What was the letter you had published in Ossining from me? I got a very strange and ridiculous letter yesterday from Ossining which was unsigned. The writer said the he *or she* (I rather think it was a *she* from the style of the writing) had "read with amazement my letter to my dear Mother, but still I think America first; as to your advancement I hope you survived to cross the German line and be *killed* as you are a traitor to your country; this is from Ossining." That's all. I suppose it is from some foolish young kid who is pro-German. The writing and spelling are rather poor. I sure would like to find out who it is. That's the first unfriendly letter I've ever received from the States. It is amusing. What was the letter I wrote to you anyway? Please be careful about all my letters as I often tell things rather unneutral and *not* pro-German.

The papers of yesterday report that two more of our boys at the front have been killed, but we don't know who yet nor anything definite about it. It may not be true.

I may be having a 20th birthday on the 9th, Mother dear, but I assure you I feel decidedly younger than that young age. I'm glad I'm no older.

Thus far we aren't pushing the Roumania question. Major Parker advises that I wait until I'm finished with this school and he feels that it will be quite possible to be sent if I then wish it. If not he'll get me sent to the front with our own esca-

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drille at once which will be O. K. to me if I stay over here. I don't wish to stay in reserve for two or three months.

I've been terribly lax in my correspondence this last month simply because of lack of time. We have plenty of work here also so I guess I'll have a hard time to make up and answer the pile of letters I've had waiting to be answered for a month or more. My friends will think me dead. This is all I've got time for now. May this find you in the best of health and good spirits, Mother dear.

Nov. 8th, 1916.

DEAR LEAH,

Well what do you think of "poor Teddy" now? He's not President but he did a big lot to put Hughes in. We got the returns of the election this noon and we all just jumped around like mad men in our sheer joy over the great news. Hip, hip, hooray! ! ! ! ! I'm crazy with delight. . . .

I received my military pilot's license on Sept. 3rd at Buc and also the license issued by the Aero Club of France. The remainder of that month I was here learning to pilot the little avion de chasse, Nieuport, which I shall pilot at the front and then spent all of last month at a school near Bordeaux where we had machine-gun practice and learned all there is to know about the various machine-guns in use.

It was intensely interesting. The school is situated on the shore of a huge lake south of Bor-

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deaux and close to the coast and we fired machine-guns from hydroplanes and fast motor-boats with gas balloons for targets and all sorts of such kind of stunts.

At the end of that course I had five glorious days of leave in Paris and then came here on the first of this month. The worst part of it is that since coming here the weather has continued to persist in being miserable and we've had only a very little flying in consequence. It did feel great, though, to pilot a Nieuport again after doing no piloting for over a month.

The little Nieuport is a wonderful aeroplane, very fast, easily handled—except in landing—and a complete delight to pilot in flight. One can do all kinds of crazy stunts with it. The last thing we have to do here are acrobatics and then I'll have to do loops, dives, turns, sidewise, and a host of other hair-raising feats with it to qualify. Just now I'm doing aerial tactics in company with other machines. The whole course is simply fascinating from beginning to end.

The accident you read which I had at Buc wasn't very much. I fell 50 metres in a 50 h. p. Blériot monoplane and smashed the machine to pieces no larger than matchsticks. I have a photo. of it and hope to show it to you some day. I was strapped in tightly, of course (we always are), so didn't get hurled out when the machine struck. I was laid up for a few days in the school hospital with a badly wrenched hip and back, but it didn't

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last very long—only every now and then I find the pain comes back in my left hip and makes me lame for a short time.

While here in September I had my second accident from which I escaped without ever a bruise. I turned completely over with a Nieuport. We all have to have some trouble. There are lots, though, who never come out of their accident alive. It's about safe to say that about as many aviators are killed in their training period as there are at the actual front by the enemy. We had an American killed at Buc the very day following my little fall there—Dowd, from Brooklyn, who was first in the Legion from the very commencement of the war. At the front we have already lost three, Chapman, Rockwell and Norman Prince, the originator of the escadrille.

I'm hoping to reach the front before Christmas time. Six months is the usual time for training for aviation and I commenced in early June. I want to get back into the fight and do my little bit before the enemy bring me down. That's all any of us desire—to get a lot of the enemy before one of them gets us. C'est la guerre.

Goodness, we're all growing up and getting old and stern. I'm glad I'm not more than twenty to-morrow. Life is mighty short anyway, but over here it certainly is on the edge of things—every blessed day. Ever sincerely yours,

EDMOND,
Caporal Pilote-aviateur.

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November 9th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Three rousing cheers! Hughes is elected and there'll be a new administration when next March comes around. We got the good news yesterday noon and just went wild with delight. The Captain granted us a half-day off on the 7th to celebrate Election Day, but of course we didn't receive any returns until yesterday. I celebrated Election Day and my birthday all together by treating a comrade and myself to a good dinner at one of the big hotels in Pau on the 7th.

Now I've got bigger hopes for coming out O. K. if I ever get back to the States after the war. I'd like to know if Roosevelt will be on Hughes's cabinet as Sec'ty of War. If he is then there *is* lots of hope. Also there's going to be a big, big boom in aeronautics in the U. S. now.

Your letter of October 14th written from Ossining arrived on the 7th with the enclosed one of Billy de Lancy's to you. What on earth is the article you sent him about me to which he refers? I wish you would enlighten me on these subjects a little more. I'm all at sea over the letter you must have published to which that fool person, of whom I spoke in my last letter, wrote when he or *she* called me a traitor to my country.

There is more possibility of my going to the French front first and later going to Roumania. It is all rather vague just now. I want to finish here first before making any definite plans. I'm sure of a lot of help from Major Parker no matter

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what I decide to do. There is a young Roumanian here who is the son of the Roumanian ambassador to England and of a very noted Roumanian family. He was at Buc with me and is about a month and a half or two months behind me in his training, being just in the beginning of the Nieuport Division here where I was in Sept. He wants to be on the French front for a few months and then go to Roumania and I may do the same—going with him to Roumania. It would help me lots, doing that, I'm sure.

There's no use in asking me to keep out of the most danger over here, dear Mother. There's danger everywhere and I'm too much of a fatalist to look out for the soft places. I'm in God's hands and not my own, so I'll do my part wherever it may please Him to lead me.

The weather has been impossible for flying lately —showers every day and night for the past five or six days. I'm afraid it will be well past December 1st before I am through here and ready for the front. Thus far I haven't done very much at all here. The first part of the course here is aerial combat tactics; the acrobatics come last.

The postal I wrote of in my last letter is the only news from —— I've had yet. Every mail I look hopefully for a letter and thus far every mail has been disappointing—miserably so. It's all such a hateful nuisance the way our letters have never reached each other all this time. It seems absolutely impossible.

Such a nice letter came from the Major yesterday.

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He wrote that I must consider them as being my own people over here and come to them whenever I can. Really, Mother, I've been almost unbelievably fortunate with my friendships over here where I never expected to find any real friends. It looks too as though I have found some more very excellent friends in the Harpers. Helen, the daughter, is extremely attractive—not at all the sort of American-Parisian girl I supposed all such girls were over here. It helps a lot to have such friends near one over in this life, dear little Mother. It takes off the real sting of the loneliness one can't help getting now and then.

Hedin has asked me to write an article on aviation over here to give to the *Atlantic Monthly*. The "A. M." has asked him to try and get some one to write an article on that subject for them. I could probably make 75 or 100 dollars on it, Hedin tells me, but I am rather sceptical about writing anything. If I get into the right frame of mind sometime perhaps I'll make a stab at the job. I never could do such work offhand.

I got a little more than I thought I did when I had that fall at Buc with the Blériot monoplane. Very frequently when I sit down I get a small pain at the very end of my spine and at varying times pains—or rather stiffness comes into my left hip and I have to limp. I'm not worrying over it, though, because it certainly can't be very serious.

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November 14th, 1916.

OH, GLIMMERING STAR,

"I'm one of those famous légionnaires
You've read so much about;
The people stop to stare at me
Whenever I come out.
I'm noted for my courageousness,
The terrible things I do;
Most everybody likes me,—
'Cept the Boches:—
They hate me through and through.

CHORUS:
While we go marching,
And the band begins to play
(to play-y-y)
You can hear them shouting—
'The liberty and the patrie's safe,
The Legion's on its way.'"

Quite some song, n'est-ce pas, chérie? Ah, oui, et elle était composée par un légionnaire—un volontaire américain. Pas mal du tout! Je vais vous chanter ça quand je serai chez vous. Comprenez-vous?

You may think from all this foregoing nonsense that I'm chock-full of brightness but ce n'est pas comme ça du tout. I'm blue—terribly so—over those miserable elections. Where has American patriotism and honor sunk to, anyway? Enough of it. Mon Dieu!

By the first of the year I hope to have brought down my first German avion or be buried myself.

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I'll be through here by at least Dec. 15th and then will soon be going out to join the escadrille at the front. I'm glad as can be too for it's been six months since I left the front and so high time I was getting back to do my duty. I've made a pretty fair record thus far in my training in the different schools and I'm satisfied as far as that goes, but what is that to doing good work at the front? *Nothing. Rien.*

There's a possibility that I shall go to the eastern front with the Russians and Roumanians, but probably not until I've first spent two or three months of active service on this western front. I'm very keen on going to Roumania and may only wait to go with a young Roumanian aviateur who is a little behind me in the schools here. He's the son of the Roumanian ambassador to England and a mighty decent chap. He may stay on this front also for a month or so before going to his own country so that if I wait for him I'll not leave for the east until next March or April. I can't say much about that yet.

Your affec't. manager,

EDMOND,

Caporal Pilote-aviateur.

November 15th, 1916.

MY DEAR LEAH,

I surrender—unconditionally and in profound disgust. There I went and wrote in maddened delight over the returns of the elections which first

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reached here and then, directly afterward they all turned out to be miserably false. Hughes lost and there's another four years ahead of us with Wilson at the helm. We all went perfectly wild with joy over here when those first returns arrived giving the election to Hughes. Then, immediately afterward, came four days of hideous suspense in which we could only wait and hope and now the sad, final result is known and we have lost every bit of hope.

You win, Leah, and I've quit in consternation and complete despair. Where has all the old genuine honor and patriotism and humane feelings of our countrymen gone? What are those people, who live on their farms in the West, safe from the chances of foreign invasion, made of, anyway? They decided the election of Mr. Wilson. Don't they know anything about the invasion of Belgium, the submarine warfare against their own countrymen and all the other outrages which all neutral countries, headed by the United States should have long ago rose up and suppressed and which, because of the past administration's "peace at any price" attitude have been left to increase and increase? They crave for peace, those unthinking, uncaring voters, and what's the reason? Why, they're making money hand over fist because their country is at peace—at peace at the price of its honor and respect in the whole civilized world—at peace while France and Belgium are being soaked in blood by a barbarous invasion—while the very citizens of the United States are being murdered and those same

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invaders are laughing behind our backs—even in our very faces. Oh, it's a bitter, bitter subject to every one of us Americans over here, Leah. We had hopes, though, before the elections that there was coming a change for the better—that our country would wake up and realize that action and not "notes" were needed, but now—well, we haven't any more hopes. We're thoroughly, disgusted, and bitter as the pill has been, we've swallowed it. Were I not such a full-blooded loyal American I would have no scruples in dying over here—a Frenchman, but I'm an American through to the core and I'll never give up that nationality my birth gave to me. It couldn't be possible for Americans in America to feel the same bitter way as Americans over here among the very scenes of this war's horrors. It's not comprehensible over there where peace reigns supreme. Come over here and you'll be engulfed like the rest of us in the realization of the necessity of the whole civilized world arming itself against this intrusion of utter brutality and militaristic arrogance. Peace—God forbid such happiness until the invaders have been victoriously driven back behind their own borders, knowing the lesson of their folly in treading ruthlessly on unoffending neutral territory and all the rest of their deeds of piracy and the blood of France and Belgium has dried up. We're fighting "jusqu'au bout" (that's a famous expression used here now, meaning to the very end). I say *we* because I'm heartily glad and proud I'm one of them. We

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are all ready and mighty willing to fight jusqu'au bout, every one of us.

These two lengthy lectures (l'une après l'autre) ought surely to merit a very, very long one from you. Please don't disappoint me and please, please don't lecture me on my heroic stand against the Democratic party and its weak principles. It's too sore a subject with me.

Hearty wishes to you all and a jolly winter for old Ossining.

Most sincerely,

EDMOND,

Caporal Pilote-aviateur.

November 16th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

My last letter was full of glad enthusiasm over the supposed results of the elections. Of course the later news of Wilson's victory came in several days following that one and our hearts and hopes have consequently sunk to our boots.

No news of any kind from —— yet and I'm simply distracted.

If you and Rivers and Rod only send me snapshots of yourselves I surely will be contented. I have those pictures of you and Dad in Paris, but they are too big to carry with me and I want one of each of you as you are now.

Paul Rockwell certainly does write mighty good articles to boost us along. Publicity pays. There are scores of fellows in the States who want to race

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over here and win glory. It's all glory in the telling, Mother. Over here we realize more fully the real side—the grim outlook for us all. Do we worry over that outlook though? NEVER!

Heaps of love to you all and a heart full of gratitude for all the spendid wishes for my twentieth year.

Your devoted son,

EDMOND.

Le 21 novembre, 1916.

DEAR CHAS.,

Yesterday I commenced doing acrobatics with the Nieuport—sharp turns on one wing, the vrille, which is the French term for shoot (a vertical drop like a corkscrew), turn-overs completely backward and some other crazy stunts. It sure is wonderful sport, old man—très amusant—and absurdly easy. These Nieuport avions de chasse are marvels of aerial perfection. One can do anything he wishes with them in the air. The higher one goes the safer one is. We do acrobatics here at the school between 1,400 and 800 metres. On account of the other machines flying all around the environs of the school it is hardly safe to do stunts below 800 metres.

Rivers has written to me about those weekly dances you all enjoy at the Lodge. You must have good fun there. Is it a club affair or just voluntary on your parts?

There's a chance that I shall be out on the front with the other boys by January. I had hopes of getting there before Christmas up until just lately,

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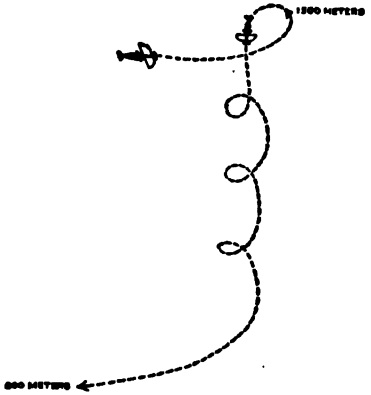
but things are going a bit slowly at the school as is always the case toward winter, when the fighting, particularly aerial fighting, is forced to quiet down because of the invariable bad weather, so I have small expectations now of getting sent out that soon. Also we haven't had very creditable weather for flying since the first of the month when I first got here and that naturally holds up the work a good deal.

Before next Spring sets in I may go to the eastern front with the Russian Aerial Service to fight air-battles over Roumanian soil. I like the outlook very much as it would very probably bring me a commission to start with and something to boot afterward.



That's what the "vrille" looks like. I can't explain how it feels—something the way one does just after he has had a trifle too much. Énorme!

What are all the fellows doing now?

I sure would like to see the old town and you all again.

Yours faithfully,

MONK,

Caporal Pilote-aviateur.

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November 26th, 1916.

My dear little Mother,

Yesterday brought me your letters. . . .

That was certainly very nice and thoughtful of you to put in that contribution for the three of us who have gone to the great beyond and myself on All Saints' Day at the little church. I'd have gone to church myself that day had I still been in Paris, but as you know I had to leave the evening before to come down here. I went into the huge Catholic church here last Sunday morning. There is an Amer. church here, I believe, but haven't found out where it is located. Church is Church anywhere and in any denomination. I'm like Rivers that way.

If you can—get hold of the *Nov. number* of the *World's Work*. It contains a splendidly written account of the escadrille written by one of the fellows—James M. McConnell—and it is very interesting indeed and will give you a fine idea of just what I shall be doing very soon.

That package you sent off sounds very, very good to me and I only hope fervently that it reaches me *sound* and *complete*. When it does I'll acknowledge its contents to all the good contributors. I have a mighty fine coat, though, which Major Parker presented me with—one of his U. S. cavalry cold-weather coats. It is like a blanket inside and has a huge fur collar. I have found it most warm and comfortable. If Uncle Lock and the rest wish to send me something useful I can suggest either of

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two articles which would be mighty acceptable and useful to me at the front—a Colt automatic revolver or a medium-size pair of field-glasses. Either will be very, very handy. We are provided with a very poor quality of revolver when we leave for the front and no glasses at all.

I began doing acrobatics on last Monday and finished on Wed. without any mishaps. It is all ridiculously easy and safe, Mother. I found absolutely no disagreeable sensation in the least while doing any of the stunts—the "vrille," which is the vertical head-drive or corkscrew turn, the backward turn, or any of the others. It was all very wonderful, but not nearly as sensational to the pilot as to the onlookers from the ground several hundred metres below.

After completing the acrobatic class I piloted the delightful little "Baby" Nieuport for two days and fell completely in love with the little rascal. It is a wonder and very easy to pilot. The hard part is in leaving and landing on the ground, particularly the latter. The machines here only contained 80 h. p. motors, but at the front we have 110 h. p. ones if we run the "Baby."

Yesterday afternoon I completed the Combat class with the most delightful and picturesque flight I have ever experienced yet. It was not a wonderfully clear afternoon, starting to cloud over about two o'clock. I left the field about a quarter to two and mounted at once to 3,000 metres. I only had an hour's flight to complete the class time, but

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the wonder and beauty of that flight thrilled me so much that I was up for 2 hours. After attaining the altitude (3,000 metres) I was above the first line of fleecy clouds which were blowing eastward from off the tops of the Pyrenees and the west. The sight of those flaky patches rolling off from the peaks of that beautiful snow-clad range which stretches along to our south between France and the Spanish Peninsula at a height of from 2,500 to 3,500 metres was exquisite.

Never have I enjoyed a flight more than that, for never have I experienced a more beautiful one. To be over those mountains and above those masses of clouds is an experience more thrilling and enjoyable than one can describe. One has to be there to realize the feeling of power and superiority one possesses on such an occasion. One feels as safe as you do on the grounds of 1404 Powel St.

What do you think of the enclosed? I cut it out of the *N. Y. Globe* sent by Dr. Miner. It's an argument which every red-blooded, true, loyal American citizen ought to recoil at. And yet they elected Wilson for 4 years more! Who did it though? Why, the host of agriculturalists and manufacturers west of the Ohio and Mississippi who don't know what invasion means because they're miles away from all such disturbances—who have only thought of their own prosperity gained greatly by Europe's drench of blood—by a policy of infantile watchful waiting—of peace at any price —when that price is the nation's honor. May they

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realize their folly before the next elections—and dearly too.

Your loving, devoted "third,"

EDMOND.

To Miss Helen G. Harper—His Marraine

This is only a letter—not the world's history

École d'Aviation Militaire,
Pau, B.-P.,
Le 27 novembre 1916.

MY DEAR HELEN,

This is my first chance since receiving your lovely letter of the 21st that I've found to reply and indeed this is only half a chance as I'll have to write it in snatches this afternoon. I've had heaps to do these last five or six days between a lot of flying and vainly endeavoring to lessen the stack of letters from the States which have been collecting since no one knows when. With me a letter always requires plenty of spare time in which to be adequately answered. I can't write exceptionally fast for the simple reason that it takes me a considerable time to think over each particular subject I wish to write about.

One of the fellows received a letter to-day from a chap who is still at Buc in which he said that King has returned from his leave in England and expects to be reformed [invalided] very soon on account of a bad lung. Is this so? Lucky King, say I!

I thought I had told you in one of my former

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letters about my plans in regard to Roumania. (?) At any rate I meant to do so. It's not at all a question over which I have made any definite decision. I am waiting until I have completed this course and am ready to begin active service on the front. Although the Roumanian forces are suffering reverses and all late reports give pretty serious results for them, that doesn't affect the aerial condition down there very greatly. The fact is, though, that the enemy aviators are having everything very much their own way. I've read and heard reports that they are attacking without much opposition the towns and killing with their machine-guns the non-combatant innocent farm people in their very fields, descending to extraordinary feeble altitudes to do so. It doesn't sound to me as though there could be very many allied aviators there to oppose them. I feel confident that an energetic pilot could fairly easily drive them back behind their own lines. I'm mighty keen on going down there, Helen, and if there is no more danger than there is on this front, which I can't believe—there surely is no use in worrying about it. War is war, dear girl, wherever it is, and there's danger in it all. Why don't you wish me to go down there? Have you any special reason? I'm fighting for the cause whether I am doing so here in France or whether I am doing so for a more needy ally such as Roumania is now. I'm sure aviators are more needed down there than they are here to drive those blamed Boche-Austrian

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slayers of innocent women and children back behind their own lines. The Roumanians are having a hard battle to fight; and I wish very earnestly to get down there to stand up with them. There are enough Americans on this front to help France. As it is I'll be under French control in the east besides being also under the control of the Russian and the Roumanian forces.

Unless I see a good chance to go to Roumania immediately I am through my training, which, of course, will be when I finish here next month (before or by the 15th I expect), I shall ask for the furlough that rumor has it we Americans (in fact all foreigners of neutral countries fighting for France) are to be allowed before February first—that is, three weeks to spend in their homeland with travel time extra and 2d-class voyage paid by the government. It is not sure yet, but I have written to Major Parker asking him to find out about it more fully. I surely could merit it as far as service is concerned and I would very, very much like to get that much time off to go over to see again the loved ones at home. It will be two years in January since I left them, and it would be very acceptable to me, Helen, to see them all again. Can you blame me? I don't believe you would.

The day before yesterday I had the most beautiful and the most enjoyable flight I have ever experienced since beginning my flying. It was my last flight necessary to complete my time in the actual combat section of the course. I had an

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hour to do. That morning I had been on a steady flight of two and a half hours with a very excellent machine. The motor went perfectly, so I asked to use it again for the afternoon's flight and the instructor gave it to me readily.

I left the aviation field about twenty minutes of two and mounted directly to 3,000 metres getting to that altitude a little after two o'clock. Small fleecy clouds were forming at about 2,400 metres just below the peaks of the Pyrenees and in the west and northwest thicker blacker clouds were gathering, at various levels. The wind was a gentle one coming straight from the west. I could scarcely notice it in the machine at all.

By two-thirty the clouds around the mountains were quite thick and were rapidly being blown eastward. Their flaky masses tumbling and rolling across the peaks and off over the lowlands were very pretty. I headed south in order to get over them. It was wonderful to look down on those patches of snowy clouds of mist and between them see the earth far, far beneath. The clouds, from five to seven hundred metres below only seemed to intensify and increase the distance to the ground although I was still at 3,000 metres as before. Each way I turned the clouds seemed to be going the opposite direction as my speed was much greater than the wind which in reality was continually driving the clouds eastward.

All this time I hadn't gone much farther south toward the mountains than Pau, but it was so de-

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lightful that I decided, as I glanced at my watch and found that my necessary hour was nearly up, that I would stay up and do what was strictly "interdit" by the school—to go southwest over the 20 or 25 odd kilometres of low foothills and get actually over the first ranges of the Pyrenees. If my motor hadn't acted so splendidly all that morning and wasn't doing so perfectly then I surely would never have attempted or dared to get so far from the school when it was strictly against the rules as I might very likely have been *kicked out* had I been forced to land with a bad motor near the mountains. As it was the kind hand of Providence was with me and I got back without any mishaps and the motor running adorably all the way. The lowest part of the mountains in sight of Pau is directly west, a bit southwest, so I headed in that direction and covered the distance in less than a half-hour. As I neared the ranges the clouds began to roll in heavy masses both below and above me—more thickly above than below, but the sun was still shining brilliantly through the frequent rifts and the coloring of the ground with the little towns and bright fields, the dark green of the trees and the white fleecy masses of clouds rolling beneath me like splotches of cream, the splendor of the steep slopes ahead of me which I was rapidly nearing, their tops covered with snow and rising above the clouds like so many rough icebergs afloat in a tossing sea all formed a picture as picturesque and thrilling as I have ever seen in real nature. On my right to the northwest

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and ahead farther over the mountains dark oppressive-looking banks of clouds were rolling up high over the mountainous horizon. I knew there was not much time to spare if I wanted to see my way back at 3,000 metres so I turned a bit and headed over a pretty valley with steep green sides rising up to snow-capped summits which extended quite a ways up into the main range. I passed the outer rim of the mountains and then turned east above a lateral running valley. Looking down in thrilled delight I beheld far, far beneath in the very bed of the valley a tiny stream winding down in twists and curves from the head and all along it were little hamlets and farms and I could see sheep grazing up over the sloping farm-lands. Far up the valley was quite a fair-sized village but I didn't go far enough into the mountains to get over it. Turning eastward I headed over some of the outer peaks which, snow-capped and bare of all foliage, were scarcely three hundred metres below me. I saw no one moving above the snow-line. It looked bleak but very splendid in the sunlight and the higher peaks to the south, which seemed very close but were in reality from five to twenty kilometres away, were a magnificent spectacle. I drank in the chilling pure air with delight and fixed that picture so firmly in my mind that I shall never forget it. Then I turned the machine toward Pau, which was faintly distinguishable to the northeast and sped for it. The wind was behind me then and helped me along considerably. In twenty minutes I was

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beside Pau. By then there were enormous masses of black clouds coming out of the west. I was between two strata of them. Those above me by that time about obscured the sun and those below were swiftly gathering so thickly that I had to keep a very sharp constant watch between them to turn against the wind to reach the school and it proved so strong then that I was fully ten minutes in getting near enough to the field to spiral down. I expected to encounter rain when I got below the clouds beneath me but I didn't and only a few drops stung me in the face just before I landed on the field. I spiralled down in one long continuous spiral from 3,000 metres to 800 and then, straightening out, headed in a long volplane toward the aviation field. I was two hours in the air, landing at a quarter to four, and never have I delighted more in a flight. I'm sure this scribbled description has far from visualized the real beauty of it, but perhaps you will get sort of an idea, a mind picture of it anyway. One simply can't be frightened at 3,000 m. —as there is always plenty of time and space below one to get down safely and effect a landing on a suitable ground if one's motor should go dead. The one I had in that machine didn't miss fire once all that day and I had it up for four and a half hours—2½ in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. It was a delight indeed to have such luck with a motor although I can say that most of the motors here at the school are very good. I've only found one or two which have caused me anxiety while running.

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Division de Combat Aérien,
École d'Aviation Militaire,
Pau, Basses-Pyrénées, France.
December 6th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

By the fifteenth I shall undoubtedly be leaving here and thus ending my training as a French pilote militaire. There will be seven days coming to me then to spend in Paris, which, although I as yet have heard nothing directly from the Major, I expect I shall spend at the Roosevelt as usual with him and his wife. I only wrote to him a couple of days ago telling him I was quite sure of leaving here on the 15th.

I've nearly completed everything here now. I've only a short voyage to make and a few more flights in the last class. I feel quite contented indeed to be so nearly through, Mother. I want to get out to the real thing—the active service.

I have your letters. They'd have been answered last week but I honestly had been writing so much that I quit writing almost entirely for that week to rest up a bit. It seems to me that it's an utter impossibility to keep even with my letters. They keep coming in and piling up in my letter-box until I get desperate and scribble off replies. I've just written one to Dave Wheeler. I don't know whether they are in the States yet or whether he has succeeded in securing his coveted commission as a "saw-bones" in the British forces and is on his way over here once more to put his impatient fingers in this wild pie again.

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Your package hasn't showed up thus far but I think it will take some time to get through the censor.

Still no word of any sort arrives from ——. I'm getting mighty well disheartened over it all, Mother. How can it possibly be that none of my many, many letters reach her and if she writes at all now how can all her letters possibly never get through. There's something mysteriously wrong, I am certain. It's getting blamed unbearably hard —this waiting, waiting, watching, hoping business and trying to remain cheerful all the while—and write cheerful letters to other people. It's about reaching the limit. I honestly feel a bit down and out—mentally and *heartfully*.

Enclosed are a couple of good views of the Pyrenees in this section. The Pic du Midi d'Ossau is one of the highest peaks here. You see, with its altitude of 2,885 metres I could go over it at 3,000 metres. Now the mountains are much more covered with snow than the pictures show, as this morning our first snowfall arrived. I was up in the air when it came and got caught. The machine rocked terribly so I had all I could do to keep it top side up and a sharp watch for all other machines in the air. Needless to say flying stopped for the day.

I'll probably be able to spend Christmas in Paris, as, leaving here on the 15th with 7 days' leave, I'll be in Paris until just to Christmas Day, so will do my best to secure an extension over that merry day.

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We four Americans here had a splendid Thanksgiving feast the night of the 28th with the Lieut. instructor of acrobatics at the school. He invited us around to his home in Pau and we had the finest dinner I've eaten over here in France. His wife was an Amer. girl from Texas. There were at least 8 kinds of excellent wine that night, champagne and a goodly collection of other drinks. My head was a trifle heavy the next A. M. but we all voted it an immense success. It surely was. We had luncheon there again last Sunday. Lieut. Simon performed aerial acrobatics with a 50 h. p. Blériot monoplane all through the States in 1910–11. He's an awfully decent sort of a chap, about 38.

I'm writing you and every one every kind of warmest wishes for a bright Christmas time, dear little Mother. I wish I was going to spend it with you. Perhaps in the new year such will be possible. We'll all hope so anyway—mighty earnestly.

Your devoted "third," EDMOND.

Division de Combat Aérien,
École d'Aviation Militaire,
Pau, Basses-Pyrénées, France.
December 8th, 1916.

DEAR, WONDERFUL STAR,

'Twas so long ago that I penned you a letter and I've been disappointed for some time now about getting one from you but—tant pis. I want to send you my very affectionate wishes for the Christmas season and the cloudy-looking New Year which is rapidly dawning in our near future. You see I'm

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a very thoughtful young trouble. Perhaps 'tis because somewhere away, 'way down in the depths of my thumping life organ I've a suspicion there's more adoration for a particular and popular young *star* than I dare to confess, but then that's neither here nor there. The fact before us is that merry Christmas is very close at hand and requires acknowledgment on our parts. Voilà! Last time when the gay day came around I was suffering in solitary loneliness out on the bleak front. Quelle misère! This time I expect to enjoy it in happy cheerfulness in bright Paris with my many delightful friends there. Quite a difference indeed. I expect to weigh anchor from all further training as an aviator on the fifteenth of this month and then have 'til over Christmas on leave at Paris. From there I'll go to the aviation reserve camp stationed close to Paris and there will wait in gluttonous idleness, with frequent sojourns in the city, until I am sent to join our boys on the glorious front—a matter, most probably, of a few weeks. Active service in the escadrille sounds mighty delightful to me, chère Étoile. I've spent 6 months behind the lines and the prospects of going back to fly over them strikes me as being quite a blessing indeed. Want to go with me?

I had lots of fun doing acrobatic stunts here last month with the Nieuport. It was far less sensational than I ever suspicioned. The one which is the most sensational is the "vrille" or corkscrew dive—a feat never yet performed in your peaceful

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country. One turns his machine up and over backward on either wing and then the machine tumbles on its nose and begins to spin like a top down, down, down—as far as the pilot cares to drop. Sometimes he loses his *bean* and the result is quite evidently disastrous to both pilot and machine—even the ground gets disturbed. Some day I'll take you up and we'll do it together. That will be when life seems *cheap* to us both.

What would you say if I suddenly walked in on you some day? Well, I don't think I will, so you needn't have those fears which just sprung up in your sweet little heart.

The war will take another two years to die. Things aren't appearing quite as cheerful in the Balkans now as one could wish them to be. It surely looks dark for poor Roumania. Bucharest is in the hands of the invading hordes and it looks bad for what little is left of the country. It is deplorable in every possible way.

What are the possibilities of society and the gay life in Ossining for the wintry season? Have they still that Summer Club which held dances in the old de Lancy place the winter I left the States?

Best, best wishes, Jeannette, for a mighty bright Christmas-tide and a very joyful happy New Year to you all. I'd like to be able to *say* that to you instead of having to write it. It's rather a long way to telephone though.

Your affectionate patron,

EDMOND,
Caporal Pilote-aviateur.

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Roosevelt Hotel, Paris,
December 16th, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

When last you heard from me I was at Pau waiting to leave very soon. That happened on the 10th and I came here on leave with 2 other Americans who finished with me. I have until the 20th, next Wednesday, when I shall have to go on to the aviation reserve depot at Plessis-Belleville which is only 30 kilometres from Paris.

I think it most probable that we will be permitted to come to Paris over Christmas. If so I shall have my room here and eat Christmas dinner at noon with the Major and his wife, and the Harpers have asked me to have dinner with them that evening if I'm in town, so I'll have to make space for two bounteous feasts that day in that case. I want very much to be here that day anyway so I shall be able to go to church. I'd like to be in a church of my own denomination that day. Tomorrow I'll go also.

Your package came just the day before I left Pau and I sure was delighted with it indeed, dear Mother. The underclothes are fine. I enjoyed the candy too—particularly so because it came from Mac's. It seemed like old times to have their candy.

Thus far I haven't been able to reply to Helen Mead's nice note and thank her for the socks and the half dozen boxes of cigarettes she sent. They were all mighty acceptable. It's hard to get Murad cigarettes here and I like them very much.

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Major and Mrs. Parker are being very lovely to me and I'm enjoying my stay here greatly. I've been with Helen Harper quite a lot. The other night she and her mother took me to the grand opera. We saw Samson and Delilah played. It was lovely and the opera house which belongs to the State is magnificent. It was my first time inside of it. They've had me to dinner several times. I go there this noon for luncheon and Helen and I are going to motor out in their car to the school at Buc. I want to see the fellows out there very much and she wants to go along for the fun and to see the place. We'll have a snowy ride, I guess. It began to rain this morning (it's rained practically every day this week as well) but a little while ago it turned to snow. I had hoped to be able to take a little flight while out there this afternoon, but now I won't be able to on account of the weather.

I had luncheon with Mr. and Mrs. Guerquin the day before yesterday. That afternoon Mrs. Guerquin took me to see a very interesting exhibition of war relics from cathedrals bombarded along the front, etc., at what is known as "le petit palais" here. It was well worth seeing.

If it is at all possible I am going to the front mighty soon after getting to Plessis-Belleville—either to a French escadrille or to our own. Later on, toward spring, a few of us will form the second escadrille of American volunteers, but that will not come for two or three months. Meanwhile I want to see plenty of active service.

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The French made a splendid drive at Verdun yesterday. That typifies the regard of the Allies for the Kaiser's offers of peace. Those offers not only were not made in good faith, but they were made merely to give an excuse to do more horrible things and be able to lay the blame upon the Allies' refusal to stop the war. The Germans need to want peace anyway, but they'll never get it that easily.

I've tried to get a letter off to Rivers before Christmas, but it's been hopeless. I did get one off to Rodman a few days before I left Pau. He will have a pretty lonely Christmas, I'm afraid, unless he succeeds in securing leave to spend it in Darlington with Mary.

And you, dear little Mother? I know yours will be lonely and not half as merry as I wish it were going to be. I wish we could all be together, but we won't. We can be together in spirit and that's some consolation.

If there's no word from dear —— waiting at Plessis-Belleville I think I'll have a broken heart to go out to fight with. I'm near the end of my patience and fortitude.

E. D. E., Division Nieuport.
Secteur Postal 92 A, France.
Dec. 22d, 1916.

DEAR RIVERS,

This is my last place before going to the front and, from all present prospects, I expect to be going out at least next week, if not before Christmas. To tell the truth I am hoping it will be after next

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Monday as I am very anxious to be able to spend Christmas day in Paris, which I won't be able to do if I am sent from here to the front between now and then. After that I want to get to the front mighty quickly. This place here—the reserve camp for all pilots going to the front, is not very interesting. We can do pretty much as we please, but I'm not greatly attracted to remaining here for a very long period. We three Americans are staying in a miserable little country hole near the camp and it's rather uncomfortable. Then, too, the weather is rather miserable and there's very little chance to get any flying at all. Late this afternoon I had my first flight here with an 80 h. p. Nieuport. It felt fine to be up again, for I haven't flown since quitting Pau on the 10th. From then until this last Wednesday, the 20th, I've been vacationizing in Paris.

I haven't said anything to any of you yet, but I confess now that I almost decided to take a leave I could easily have secured, of 15 days in the U. S., not counting the trip across both ways and reduced rates, at the end of this very month to make you all a little visit. I had all my plans laid to sail on the *Chicago* from Bordeaux on the 30th and just walk in and give you all a grand surprise. I even bought a suit of civilians in Paris to wear over there as we can't sport any uniforms in a neutral country. I finally, after thinking it over a lot, decided to call if off and not take the risk of any trouble over there even though my two years is up in early January —the 8th, I believe. My career over here is too

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precious to risk bringing to a stop now by any foolishness, and though I sure do want to see you all still I'm swallowing my disappointment and am staying here to get to the front quickly. The suit of "cits" will have to wait *unused* until the war is over or a later day anyway.

We witnessed a very disastrous accident here this P. M. A Voisin biplane, one of the big bombarding machines, crashed to the ground due to a wire catching in the propeller and both pilot and observer were crushed to death. The machine was completely wrecked.

Very soon I'll be out on the grim front again and flying out over the lines. Then will commence the real work I've been training for all these months and I'm looking forward to it with an immense amount of anticipation and pleasure. Why worry?

I hope the New Year will prove a brighter one for us all. For me it doesn't make much difference. For you and Mother and Rod it does. I'm where individuality doesn't count for much—we're just a part doing its part in this great war for a cause we'll die for, but with you all it's different. You need better times. God give them to you, dear brother.

Devotedly,

EDMOND.

Roosevelt Hotel, Paris,
Christmas Eve, 1916.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

Before me are your two letters and what more fitting time to answer them is there than now,

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Christmas Eve? Unlike last Christmas I'm far better off to enjoy the bright day, but just think of it! This is my fourth away from you. In 1913 I was at the Training Station at Newport, in 1914 in Boston, in 1915 out on the French front and this one in Paris. I feel very fortunate indeed to be here as I was expecting to be sent to the front from Plessis-Belleville, the aviation reserve depot, where I went last Wednesday after completing my ten days' leave here. This morning though a demand which I made for permission to spend Christmas with the Major and his wife was granted to me by the commandant of the depot and I came in on the 10.30 train, arriving here just in time for luncheon, I'm due back at noon Tuesday, so it gives me all of to-morrow without need of thought for any evening train to catch and thus I'll be able to enjoy the two Christmas dinners to which I have invitations. What more can a lonely soldier ask for in a foreign land on Christmas Day? All the same, dear little Mother, I'd far prefer I was back where we all could be feasting ensemble en famille.

I feel like a big brother to-day as I helped trim the tree for the youngsters at the Harpers' this afternoon and just now finished assisting the Major in decorating their little tree for their two little girls. I think I told you in my letter of last week, written while I was here that their two youngsters were to arrive from America on Monday. Major Parker went down to bring them back from Bordeaux and they arrived on Tuesday morning, the

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day before I left. They're quiet, sweet little girls. The oldest is 8 and her little sister is two years younger. They surely ought to have a happy Christmas to-morrow judging from the pile of presents arranged under the little tree for them to find in the morning. We're all to march in together just as you used to have us all do at home on Christmas morning—not so very many years ago, dear Mother.

It was so beautiful this morning and so vastly different from the windy, rainy days we've continually had lately that I routed out early and went over to the aviation field for a flight. We fly whenever we wish at the depot and have very few restrictions—particularly Americans. I got hold of a good 110 h. p. Baby Nieuport and had ¾ of an hour in the air of real enjoyment. I did more acrobatics in that one flight than I've done yet at any one time. It did feel great to be up in such dandy weather again.

The day before yesterday I wrote to Rivers and told him all I knew of my plans. I think it won't be many days now before I, and the other two Americans there with me, will be sent out to the front—most probably to join our own escadrille, but perhaps to enter some regular French escadrille and later to form the 2d American escadrille when a few more of the fellows have completed their training.

Understand that we cannot be called *officially* the American Escadrille as the States have kicked about

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that. We are officially the escadrille of volunteers, although I have heard rumors that we may be termed the Lafayette Escadrille. That wouldn't be a bad name at all.

G. D. E., Division Nieuport.
Secteur postal 92 A., France.
Sunday, January 7th, 1917.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

It was Christmas Eve when I last wrote to you. Since then has come your letter written on December 8th.

On Christmas morning we got up fairly early and we had a jolly little tree gathering—the Parkers, including their two cute little daughters, some friends of theirs in the hotel and myself. It seemed so much like our Christmas mornings we all used to enjoy so much and wait for with so much impatience at the dear old home. The youngsters had a delightful time opening all their presents. I came in myself with a book and an electric pocket flashlight (something I needed very much too) which the Major and his wife gave me, and there were heaps of candy and candied fruit to be tasted. We had quite a time of it.

I went down to the American Church at 10.30 for the Christmas service and remained for Holy Communion. The Major brought the youngsters down for the service also, but they came in a little late and sat back and didn't stay for Communion.

At noon we all had a pleasant little family dinner at the hotel.

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Along toward the middle of the afternoon I took a lonely walk down the beautiful Avenue de Bois de Bologne, which is one of Paris's prettiest drives, and then strolled over to Helen Harper's home for the evening dinner. She had a number of young friends in for it, including a young American chap in the American Ambulance service who was going several days later with a section being sent out there. The dinner was faultless and we all voted it a big success.

We got up from the feast about nine o'clock and then danced until well onto midnight. They have a fine Victrola.

Altogether it was a decidedly more agreeable and less lonely Christmas for me than I spent last year away out on the muddy front with the Legion and even better than the 1914 one, for you may recall I had to spend that one all by myself in Boston. Where was I the year before that too?—Yes—just as lonely and more so in the Newport Training Station.

New Year's Day I spent out here. New Year's Day is, with Independence Day (which occurs *every year* on July 14th), over here one of *the* big days of the year, bigger, indeed, than is Christmas. Every soldier in France received, just as at last year's New Year's Day, a glass of champagne with his mid-day feast. It wasn't half bad at all and the feed was excellent as far as army spreads go.

In spite of the very disagreeable weather here

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which has prevailed nearly all the time I've managed to get in quite a good deal of time in flying. I've gotten so terribly enthusiastic over it, Mother, that I just want to get out to the front and fly all the time. I'll get out there very soon now from all I can tell at present, but it simply is driving me crazy—this having to be here so long now with no absolutely definite word as to when we shall be called out. We understand, from the lieutenant of our escadrille that there is a machine for each of us ready and waiting with the escadrille for us to come out. Each is a 110 h. p. Nieuport. All I want now is just to get out there and drive into the enemy's territory and do—or be done myself. I hope earnestly that I'll be able to do the former before I get the latter.

Lufbery, our "ace," has already brought to earth six enemy avions, which is wonderful work on any pilot's part.

Not one word thus far, Mother, from —— and the fact is simply eating the heart out of me, every day a little bit deeper.

To-day being Sunday, there is liberty for all of us this afternoon, so there's no flying. It's time for the letters to be given out though, so I'm going over to the Division quarters and see if I have any.

. . . . . .

I've been over there for over an hour now waiting for the mail and it hasn't arrived, so this is another day of disappointment. Well—it's no worse than its many brother days before it.

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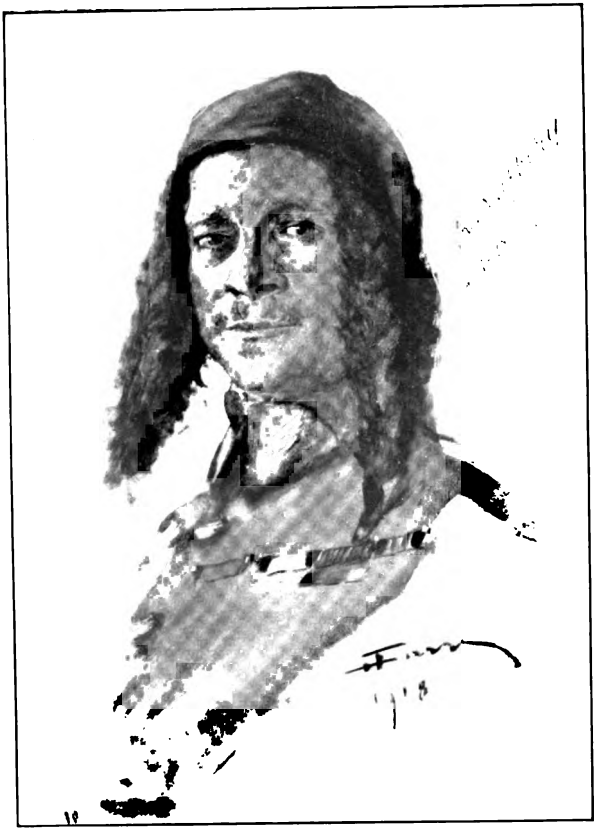

Major Raoul Lufbery, American Ace of the Lafayette Escadrille.

From the painting by Lieutenant Farré.

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Have you read or seen the book "Kitchener's Mob," written by a young American fellow who was in the British forces in France during most of 1915, James Norman Hall? Most probably you have heard of it anyway, and if you haven't yet read it; I advise your doing so as it is very good indeed. Hall, as it happens, is now an élève-pilote at the aviation school at Buc and one of our "hopefuls" for the escadrille.

My two years of absence will be complete tomorrow, dear Mother, and I'll be a real outcast; can call myself a genuine mercenary soldier of fortune, a man without a country. What a title over which to boast—only I can't boast.

Back in my suitcase in Paris, which I am now keeping at the Roosevelt are two bundles neatly tied and in order. One contains all the letters you have written to me since I left you—the other holds all of those from ——. Each time I go into Paris and have any of your letters already answered I take them in and add them in order to the pile. Yours I've been able to add to right along, but it has been some time now since the other smaller pile has received any additions. I am positive that not one of yours or —— letters have I ever lost, even through all the hard campaigning with the legion. They are all there, little Mother, and some day I hope we can go over them together. At least you will be able to. You said once, I believe, that you are holding on to all of mine. If this is so I shall be very glad because they may be very use-

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ful to me some day if I ever desire to write up my experiences in story form. As it is I am now devoting some of my spare moments to writing out quite a complete and as readable an account as possible of my experiences in diary form beginning from December 29th, 1914, the day I left the "G." It's a long, long task as I find lots of interest to write about in the majority of the days. I purchased some special blank-page books of 140 pages each (size 10 x 5 inches) and it looks as though I shall use up nearly two volumes for each year and this is the commencement of the third year! I find it very amusing and interesting writing though and sometimes even quite sad. Possibly it reads more interestingly to me than it will to others, but I'm trying not to make it read that way as much as I possibly can. It takes lots of time though, and, as I can't write every day, the work is progressing rather slowly.

G. D. E., Division Nieuport.
Secteur postal 92 A., France.
January 8th, 1917.

DEAR STAR,

From the whirligig way in which you write I guess you'll just have to be renamed the "Comet." By the time I had finished deciphering your "Epistle to the Rum ans" I had large doubts whether I was on my head or my feet, and felt more like calling for the doctor than anything else. How you do spin! You got me all wound up and then deliberately left me there to untangle myself out

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of a most hopeless mess of words. Woman, have you no tenderness in your heart?

You certainly put a new one over on society when you handed them "Dawn." Few people ever know what dawn is anyway and those who ever get up early enough to see it rarely take the pains to look, so they can't appreciate what a wondrous thing it is. Were you the sun itself, or just one of its beautiful baby-pink rays? Do you remember the little song you used to sing to me? Surely you must still possess it. It's called "Dawn." Part of the words read, if I remember rightly, "Men saw the flush and called it Dawn—Dawn," etc., etc. You take particular notice, don't you, you young suffer-er-jet, that it says *men* and nothing about *women?* Women, you see, were never up that early in the night to take notice. Unfortunate creatures!

When did I write to you last? I think it was before I left Pau. At any rate I shook the dust of that famous watering-place (it did rain a good deal while I was there) from my soles (I have two souls —one is mine and the other belongs to my left shoe —the right one is worn out) on December the tenth, year of—nineteen hundred and sixteen, deceased. That was the end of my training as un pilote-aviateur militaire français, and I was permitted to celebrate that great event with ten days in Paris, where I had a most joyous time indeed. My stays in Paris are far from lonely ones now, as I've made quite a number of mighty excellent friends

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and they keep my time pretty loaded with enjoyable engagements.

Since the 20th I've been vainly trying to be comfortable and contented here. This is only a sort of reserve depot for us where we stay until orders come for us to go out to the front. It's about thirty miles out of Paris and so we can make frequent excursions to the city when life here becomes too boring.

I saw "Samson et Dalila" played at the National Opera House in Paris, on Dec. 14th. Delmas played the part of the chief priest and was fine. There's something you not only want to visit, dear Star, but want to act in—the great National Opera House of Paris. It's the most beautiful and magnificent opera house I've ever seen and, I think, in the world. Some day I'd love to be in one of its boxes and hear Jeannette H—— sing the Parisians to her feet. Greater dreams than that have come true, Jeannette.

Out at the front with our escadrille, which is now called officially "L'escadrille des Volontaires," is a 110 h. p. Nieuport all in readiness for me to pilot it out over the enemy lines to hunt down and destroy enemy machines. It's only a matter of a very few days now before I shall receive my orders to go out. I was so hopefully certain that I'd be out of here long before this that the delay, due to I don't know exactly what cause, has made me mighty fretful and restless. This place is terribly boring in spite of the fact that we can do and do do pretty much as we like. When we feel like flying we take

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a machine and go up for a flight and when we desire to loaf we loaf. Some mornings when the weather has been too disagreeable to permit flying I've stayed in bed scandalously late. Why get up? There are two other American fellows here with me waiting the same as I to go out to the front.

Accidents seem to be happening 'most all the time in the schools—mostly due to carelessness on the part of the pilots. Two were killed at Pau after I left, two crashed to earth here in a big bombarding-machine just after I arrived, and on the Friday before New Year's Day a pilot was burned to death in crashing to earth with a little English Sopwith scout-machine.

The "ace" of our escadrille, Adjutant Lufbery, has brought down his sixth German aeroplane in aerial combat lately which is splendid work on his part. He is among the "aces" of the entire French aerial corps now. As soon as a pilot has brought down five enemy machines he is named in the daily French official despatches and becomes a marked man. Lufbery is the only American who has thus far reached that honorable stage.

It's nearly two years since I left the States, J. H., and I'm getting old. Yes, I feel it, really. Why, even my hair is beginning to fall out! I'll be an old man before you will even.

Best to everybody and all of yours,

Your devoted manager,

EDMOND CHARLES CLINTON GENET! ! !

ESQ.,

Caporal pilote.

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Escadrille La Fayette, N–124.
Secteur postal 182, France.
January 20th, 1917.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

This is my first full day at the front with the escadrille. Like most all the occurrences of my life, this change has occurred with a jump. I was sent out here by the G. D. E. to get a machine from another escadrille here and pilot it back to the G. D. E. as it was one being discarded from use on the front. I arrived yesterday morning and discovered that the G. D. E. had already 'phoned here ordering me back without taking the machine as there had come an order for Bigelow, Parsons, and myself to join our escadrille. Instead of going back I stayed right here at the order of our captain, thus saving a rather unnecessary trip to the G. D. E. and back here. I've only a few things of my belongings here as practically all my outfit I left at the G. D. E., thinking, of course, I would be back there. They're in the little hotel there where we all were staying and I'll be able to get them this next week. Parsons and Bigelow ought to be out here by Monday at the latest.

It's a big relief to me to be out here at last, dear Mother. The rumble of the big guns this morning, which 'roused me from beneath my warm covering of four big blankets (for it's right cold here and we've snow all over the ground) wasn't new music to my ears. It seemed like old times, the roar of old comrades.

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Two of your letters lie unanswered, with many others, with my things, but I'll answer them more fully when I get my things again.

It is by a very singular coincidence that I slept the night before last on my way out here at the very same little village in which I slept the very first night I reached the front here from Lyons with the Legion in March of 1915. I'll be flying over the very part of the front from which I first faced the enemy so many months ago in those early ones of the war.

It may be some time yet before I have a machine of my own. Meanwhile, as two of the fellows are in America on leave, I'll be using one of theirs. The days are persisting in being so disagreeable lately that there has been very little flying done at all.

We are quartered in a very comfortable wooden barrack, two to a room. There are orderlies for each of us, mechanics for each machine, and automobiles to go around with if we care to go to any near-by big town. We eat excellently and really one feels quite like a prince—far different from the life in the schools—*or* in the famous Legion.

I was with the Major a couple of days this week before coming out here, although he doesn't know yet, of course, that I am here for good. I intend to drop him a few lines to-day if possible.

Gaylord Hubbel in Ossining told Mr. Harper some while ago about my having been the first to volunteer on board the *Georgia* to go ashore in case of necessity at Vera Cruz. Isn't it funny that all

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the good stories about me seem to be getting around and the others are keeping dark. Some day those will out and then there'll be a mess of affairs.

I made my first little speech in public on Wednesday last. Mr. Hedin of the *Brooklyn Eagle* office in Paris took me to the monthly luncheon of the Associated Franco-English Press which was held at the Café de Paris (one of the best Parisian restaurants) and I happened to be the only one there who was in uniform. There were about forty newspaper men of the French, American, and British papers. The chairman, Mr. Adams, introduced two gentlemen who were to say a few remarks and then he announced that the great-great-grandson of Citizen Genet, who was serving with the French in the war in the aviation corps was with them and a few other remarks, and, of course, I had to get up and acknowledge as best I could. I didn't say very much, but they all say I did all right and lots of them came up after the luncheon and were very pleasant to me.

Do you know, Mother dear, that it's exactly two years to-day that I sailed away from little old New York? It seems impossible.

Nothing yet from ——, Mother, and here I am going out to fight feeling the way I do over it—discouraged, lonely, blue, distracted.

Endless love and best wishes to you and all, dear Mother, from

Your devoted "third,"

EDMOND.

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MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

January 28, 1917.—My last letter, written the 20th, was from the front, so of course you know all about my getting out here from that one. I've been to Paris since then, because on Monday I flew a machine in part of the way and then went by R. R. to Plessis to get my belongings which I had been forced to leave there when I was sent out the previous week. I got them, and, as the captain told me I need not rejoin them here until Thursday, I stayed the two intervening days with the Parkers in Paris. It was quite fortunate for me, because I was thus able to see Helen Harper before she left for Italy.

Excuse this scrawl. I'm already "turned in" for the night, but am sitting up in my bunk and have a lamp beside me for illumination purposes. We're having the coldest weather I've found since coming over the "pond." These last few days have been superbly clear, but terribly cold and with a sharp, biting northerly wind. Everything freezes up. I actually had to thaw out my fountain pen the night before last to write up my diary and I've a bottle of ink which is simply a solid brick of iced ink. Needless to say, we heat up the water we use for washing purposes every morning.

I've got a Nieuport of my own now, one which is really new, and to-morrow I go out over the lines with the escadrille for the first time. I haven't been out yet simply because there was no machine for me, and, in fact, I haven't been here many days

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yet, having been in Paris after my things a good part of this week.

For the past two weeks I've been so much on the move that I haven't been able to answer letters or do much writing of any sort except write up my diary every night. I always manage to do that no matter how rushed or how tired I may be. This is the fifth year now I've been doing that without ever losing a single day. The diary Rivers sent me for this year *is* the right kind, but the company didn't get up as good a one this year as they have the former ones. You miscomprehended my words.

I think I have a mighty courageous and brave little Mother, for you write that you would like to have been with me on that flight I took up over the Pyrenees at Pau. Do you think you would risk yourself with your wild "third" in a little flying-machine at 3,000 or more metres (about 9,000 ft.) away above clouds and jagged mountains? Some day I hope I shall be able to test your courage, little Mother.

We have a very pleasant captain of the escadrille, and the lieutenant (de Laage) is a dandy fellow. Of course, Thaw, who is a lieutenant, looks out for us a good deal, but de Laage is our regular lieutenant. Both he and the captain speak English—particularly de Laage. We all eat together in one mess, and our cook is an A1 man.

Must get to sleep now, dear little Mother. I have to get off to the lines at 7 to-morrow morning, which means a rising at 6 o'clock. Flying these

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days is mighty cold work and risky, too, on account of the high winds. To-morrow I'll be under fire again—this time as an *aviator* not a *légionnaire*. Good night and God bless you.

Your ever devoted son,

EDMOND.

Escadrille N-124.
Secteur Postal 192, France.
February 2d, 1917.

DEAR, DEAR RIVERS,

Why your letter of December 4th didn't reach me until to-day I cannot tell except that it had, of course, to go to Pau and then to the G. D. E. and then out here; but I've already received letters of much later dates which have had to take the same route. At any rate it's here and I surely am mighty well contented to hear from you.

I'm still watching each mail with sort of a forlorn and dying hope for letters, but it does seem sort of a hopeless proposition. Indeed, I've been getting downright blue and disheartened over the whole affair. I'm too keen on —— not to have it hurt like the very dickens not to be hearing from her right along and to be utterly in the dark this way over the actual reasons why I don't hear or why she doesn't seem to receive my very frequent letters. Here it is February, 1917, and the last letter I had from her was in early August, 1916, except for the strange lonely postal which came in early November—all of which you already know

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from my former letters to Mom. *Voilà assez de la question du cœur! J'ai une autre chose maintenant à vous dire. Écoute!*

You ask me something which both startles and amazes me. Are you really and actually serious about wishing to come over here and enter the aviation corps to fight with us for this glorious cause and country? Do you mean to say that you are seriously thinking of following in the footsteps of your crazy, hair-brained kid brother? Rivers, I don't really know whether to advise you to come over or not. Of course the training is well worth it if one gets through all right and *can* return and take up aviation in the States. Undoubtedly there will be heaps of chances for us back there if we are capable of continuing when this big scrap is completed and we're free to return *chez nous*, but the dangers and risks are mighty big and to have two of us in the game—well, think it over very carefully before you do any moving. You certainly have—or seem to have—excellent chances of a commission for which I congratulate you with all my heart. Will it really be worth your while to give up all that, come over here, run the risk we're running, take from six to eight months in training, take the chance of being overthrown by your own country which you want to serve and even run the chance of having the war end before you could get time to put in any active service? For, after all, there are *some* chances at least that it will terminate before next year. If you do decide to

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come I advise you to do so well before July. Come as early in the Spring as possible—April will be a good month to start in training. Be sure, though, through a thorough medical exam, that you are O. K. in all physical matters and bring a medical certificate with you, a birth certificate (if possible), and you'll probably have to show references that you have no German connection, which, of course, will be easy as the fact of our excellent French ancestry will be sufficient to calm all suspicions and also, I guess, the fact that your younger brother has already two years of good service under the French colors and is in the Franco-American Corps will be enough to get you in all right. Look out for your passport though—I don't advise you to give the real reason of your coming over here when you get it. Say you are coming over to serve in the ambulance corps or else some private reason, such as I used—to look up property of your French connections, or some such reason as that—which I think will be better than the former I have suggested, the ambulance work, as in that you might have to produce papers from the American Ambulance Service, etc., to confirm your statements, whereas a personal family reason would let you out of such trouble.

How I would like to have you come, dear brother! Think it all over mighty hard though before you make any definite move. I wouldn't be in any other place myself for all the world, but for you it's an entirely different question indeed. Don't

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be rash. You already have got military prospects before you over there. I've got to win mine over here and I've already two years of steady excellent service to help me along toward that end. Again I say—don't be rash. Heaven knows, though, dear Rivers, I certainly would be delighted to have you here with me in this wonderful big fight—among this wonderful heroic people.

If the U. S. accepts this latest extraordinary dictation from Germany which is in to-day's papers, about the steamship route to England I can't see that any genuine self-respecting American should feel justified in holding his head up any more. It's abominable and goes fully beyond all bounds of patience. Cæsar or Nero could not have dictated any more severely to their slaves than has the Kaiser to our country. It's simply dictation and nothing more, and no self-respecting nation can stand it. Will ours? Damn the Boches! I hope and pray that I can live long enough to make them realize there's one American who refuses to be neutral in the face of their confounded audacities.

Since getting out here I've been out over the lines but not very much on account of the weather. The days have been excessively cold and snowy and sleeping at night is no really warm event. We won't be very active as far as flying is concerned until more toward March, I'm afraid. I've got a machine of my own now—a 110 h. p. Nieuport. It's a dandy machine, but I burned out two cylinders this morning just after I started up and had to come back. The cold weather has been rotten

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for the oil and it froze in my tank and the oil clutch. I get a new motor to-morrow to replace the old. The first morning I flew over the lines I went 4,200 metres (about 12,600 ft.) which is some altitude for a clear and very cold morning. The view was wonderful and just about 500 metres below and to our right (I was out with one of the other fellows) shells fired at us from a German anti-aircraft battery were bursting. A light covering of snow helped to accentuate the outlines of the ground, the railroad-lines, roads, villages, etc. That was one of our exceptional clear days though. This is surely no kid's game. It's mighty tiring and trying on the nerves and one feels it lots at the end of each day's flying. One has to keep constantly on the alert—and a mighty wide-awake alert too. Manœuvring the machine has practically to be done involuntarily—mechanically, I should say, and keep all the senses absolutely on the alert for the enemy and the course taken. The enemy machines drop down behind one with blamed suddenness and then there's the devil to pay. It's *some* job! There isn't a great deal of danger of being brought down by shells although there have been machines brought down that way—mostly with a lot of luck on the part of the gunners. Both sides, though, do possess some mighty good anti-aircraft batteries.

Now write to me immediately when you decide what you're going to do about coming over here—only, go thoughtfully.

Ton frère dévoué, EDMOND.

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Escadrille N-124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
February 10th, 1917.

DEAR RIVERS,

Since writing to you on the 2nd things of startling and vital interest, as you know, occurred between the States and Germany. It certainly seems inevitable now that a real rupture will occur between the two and within a mighty short time also. Of course it is largely up to Germany to make the first hostile move, but we all look for and expect her to make such a move before many days—in fact, yesterday's papers reported an American schooner sunk by Germany and an English one with some Americans on board, I believe, who were lost. The tiny thread keeping the two powers from actual hostilities will certainly break soon. The last infamous dictation from Germany about American shipping was simply outrageous. No nation could accept it and still be respected. Goodness knows we've swallowed enough of the Kaiser's dictations and excuses. If this last had been accepted I was determined to become a Frenchman without any scruples. Excitement surely must be tense over there over the crisis and the inevitable result which may come at any moment. Americans over here are wildly excited. We're chasing after the day's papers with considerable thirst and anxiety. We were all most amused yesterday when we read an article in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, which we receive every day, of Ford's offer of put-

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ting out no less than 1,000 submarines a day for the government in case of war. He says a pacifist, when fully aroused, is like a raging lion. It's a funny world this, isn't it?

Indirectly and unofficially we have been told that, on account of our serving France during the neutrality of the States, we have forfeited our rights of citizenship. Most of us don't credit the fact. Should the States enter the conflict it remains to be seen just what we can do, whether we can enter the service of the States or simply remain French aviators. The majority of us seem to favor the latter. We're here fighting the blame enemy and well satisfied with the fact. If the U. S. won't acknowledge us and the service we could render her in war-time—"*tant pis.*" We'll stay here and continue to do our little bit as Frenchmen willingly. Some of the fellows hold commissions in their State guard. Whether they will be called back or *allowed* to go back to fill them is a question to be solved when the necessity arrives. The U. S. could take us all over as an escadrille, promote us, and let us remain right here to keep on fighting, increasing our number with men from the United States aviation service who are already military pilots. Will they do that?

The present situation should considerably alter your proposed idea of coming over here to join us, Rivers. Surely, in case of war, you can very quickly and easily secure your commission as ensign and find more good in such a job than coming

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over here. Think it over mighty well before you act, for you certainly don't want to make a fool of yourself. If you think you can do better by coming don't for one minute let me discourage your wishes. You know best and personally I sure will be mighty glad to have you. Serious fellows are needed here. I'm no model myself, but I am quite positive that I'm decidedly serious about why I am here and my duty. Major Parker can assure you of that for he has seen more of me than any one else outside of the service. My age and my youthful looks are big drawbacks to me, but they're things I can't very well alter, so I have to get along with them as best I can.

Write soon and let me know just what your plans are. By the time this reaches you you may be under war régime and thinking of fighting like we are doing over here. I haven't heard from, or of, Rod for some time and am wondering what is being done with him in relation to the situation. Will he be held on the border to guard against invasion which may possibly be incited by Germany or called to repel internal troubles which will certainly break forth should war be declared. There are far too many Germans and pro-Germans over there to prevent such deplorable occurrences. May they all come out the worst for their damnable efforts.

Best wishes and much love from

Your devoted brother,

EDMOND.

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Escadrille N-124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
February 13th, 1917.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

I have been delayed in writing to you for several days as flying and writing letters are hard things to do the same day and I've had quite a number of letters lately which had to be written. I was held up for a while with flying on account of motor trouble and a new one was installed. Yesterday I tried it out and this afternoon I spent two solid hours over the lines and feel almost too tired now to write, but there are already two of your letters before me unanswered (Jan. 12th and 17th) and I feel I should at least try to get this off, even though I may have to complete it to-morrow. When one comes to think of it there is great possibility that many days will go by before this or any mail is sent over to the States or any comes over here from the States for the simple reason that reports have it that no ships are leaving with the mails either from here for the States or vice versa. Communications will probably be opened before very long, as armed vessels will very likely be sent out with all ships of American nationality on the seas on account of the present critical crisis between the States and Germany. I feel sure, as do most other people, that there will be actual war existing between the two nations in a mighty short space of time—long before this reaches you. We cannot deplore such an event. It is the inevitable which

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has been coming all the while and we should be very thankful that our President has at last done the right thing at the right time. The people of the States seem to be far too much aroused and ready for war to permit of backing down. It is only for Germany to make the first hostile move now and it's a sure thing that she will, sooner or later. The rupture has gone too far now to prevent a complete severance and war.

My last letter to you was on January 28th, the day before I made my first flight over the lines. Since then I have made quite a number of flights but have had no particular exciting experiences thus far. I've been shelled a few times and have nearly had my face frozen in the excessive cold which has prevailed these past few weeks. It has been bitterly cold practically all the while—very exceptional for France as the usual French winter weather is damp, rainy—with occasional wet snows —and plenty of raw winds. It has been marvellously clear for a long time, but we're likely to get the wet weather any day now. This continual clear weather—and so cold—is very surprising.

We are having a little difficulty in securing sufficient coal and wood for our fires, but we're managing to keep our living-room warm and habitable, and we cover up well in our cold rooms to sleep at night. One can't expect all the comforts of home in war-time at the front.

Our living-room where we are most of the time while off duty is a mighty attractive little den. We

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have covered all the walls and ceiling with corrugated cardboard strips (smooth side outside) over the rough boards and on this in various places I have drawn and painted vivid scenes of aerial combats between French and German machines, etc., and here and there I've made other pencil drawings of girls. Each of the two doors is draped with attractive blue and brown curtains; the four windows have white curtains (except one which caught fire from a lamp by accident last night) and a huge painting of an Indian head, the symbol of the escadrille which is also painted on each of our machines. The Indian's mouth is open as though he was shouting his terrible war cry in defiance of his enemies and he looks very warlike indeed. It's quite an appropriate symbol for the escadrille, being something genuinely American.

For entertainment we have a pretty fair piano, which we have hired from a family in a near-by village by the month, and a victrola with a goodly supply of American and French records. There are at least five of us who have a smattering of musical ability so you can imagine that the piano is tinkling pretty frequently each day. Your "third" does his full share of the pounding with neither scruples nor regard for piano notes or the ears of the listeners. 'Nough said!

We eat splendidly all the time and, as we all eat "ensemble" without regard to military grade (captain and all) it is far more sociable and jolly than in the other escadrilles which have separate

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messes for officers and under-grade pilots. We have a very good system here of everybody speaking English throughout the noon meal and paying a fine of two cents for each break into French. At dinner it is just the opposite; we all speak French and pay fines for any mistakes into English. It helps us learn French and the Captain and Lieutenant, who are French, and who can speak pretty fair English, learn English. It works finely.

We each have two mechanics to care for our machines and an orderly to look after our personal wants, so you see we are pretty well off. We have an excellent chef too.

Still no word from —— and I'm far more discouraged than ever—than I can express to any one, dear Mother. Perhaps I'll hear from her before very long. I surely hope so, as you can well imagine.

My dear Mother, from your letter I imagine that you think I intended to go over there on that furlough I spoke of finally not taking, and never returning here. For goodness sake don't suppose anything like that. It isn't what I had in mind at all. I merely would have spent a couple of weeks or so with you and then returned; besides, I found out I would be sent to the front much sooner than I at first supposed. I had absolutely no intention, dear Mother, of quitting over here the place I cherish so much. Get such a foolish supposition out of your dear head quick.

Mrs. Parker is keeping my suit free from moths

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and creases, and I don't believe I'll outgrow it for some time. I wore it one night while in Paris, just to try it and to get a brief change from a stiff uniform. It really felt good too.

Rod and Rivers have both sent me pictures of themselves, so all I want now is one of you, dear little Mother. Try to get one.

Must call this off now and get myself tucked away for sleep. I'm jolly well tired.

Best wishes to everybody and just *heaps* of love.

Your loving son,

EDMOND.

Escadrille N–124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
February 13th, 1917.

DEAR LEAH,

It looks mighty like there will be real war considerably before this tardy epistle ever reaches you. You are quite right in your idea that everything will turn out for the best. It's turning quicker than we thought. The inevitable has at last happened—or will very shortly, from all appearances, and thank Providence for it, too, that our President has at last seen fit to do the right thing at the right time. In fact, when we look the affair squarely in the face, it was the one thing he could do—show the cold shoulder to Germany. Can you wish peace when you realize the infamous dictation Germany sent to our government over American shipping? Could you walk a narrow

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chalk-line, doubled up and with your hands behind your back and all sorts of other humiliations with a loaded pistol ready to be fired at you if you ran off the line and not feel ready to contest your right when you had sufficient strength to do so? No, never; and so it is with your country. War is certain unless Germany backs down, and it's a very, very doubtful question whether she will. Nine out of ten chances she won't. When we look at it from her side we find many reasons why she would benefit by having America at war against her. The greater part of the munitions which the States are now sending to help the Allies would have to be held over there for our own use as we are greatly unprepared and undoubtedly Germany would incite the Mexicans to invade over the border and we would need arms and munitions to repel them. There would be innumerable internal troubles throughout the whole country to be repelled, for America is full of pro-Germans who would do all in their power to help their Fatherland.

You'll be giving up school-teaching yet, Leah, to don the attractive garb of a Red Cross nurse to care for the "poilus" (French army slang term for soldiers).

You see by my address that I am at the front with the escadrille. I came out soon after the middle of January and feel mighty well pleased to again be on active service. Flying over the enemy lines is wonderful and extremely exciting work and a bit of a strain on one's nerves as well. Lately

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it has been exceptionally cold work also and several times I have come near freezing my face—especially its nasal member. The cold weather has been rather hard on the motors—freezing up the oil and making all sorts of trouble. It bids fair to warm up, though, now, and I predict a lot of the usual French winter weather—such as we endured last year to great displeasure—rain, sleet, and continual damp winds. We have delightful quarters in which to live here at the aviation base, but coal and wood are quite scarce and difficult to secure, so the question of heating is often rather deplorable. We manage to keep our attractive living-room comfortably warm and we cover up snugly and warmly in our *un*heated rooms to sleep at night. C'est comme ça en guerre.

We have one highly honored man in the escadrille, so far, who is one of the French "aces," having brought down, to date, six enemy aeroplanes. His name is Lufbery and he has just been awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor, the highest French medal. He already has received the French War Cross and the Military Medal.

You would be quite startled to see our mascot of the escadrille. Just at present he is rolling and frolicking about the floor with his pal, a black-and-white terrier. *He* is an eight-and-a-half-months-old lion cub and we call him "Whiskey." He has been with the escadrille since he was about a month old and is quite a pet with us all. He really don't know whether he's a lion or a dog. More than

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likely he thinks he's the latter, for all the animals he has ever seen or played with have been dogs and his real companion is this terrier who sleeps with him every night. "Whiskey" is some lively pup all right and quite playful though he growls as though he was angry at every one including himself. We can take him up in our arms and fondle him, and while we are eating at the table he goes racing around the table from one to the other and climbs up with his great clumsy paws on the table's edge to beg loudly for his share. Unfortunately "Whiskey" is blind in his right eye, having been hit there accidentally by one of the fellows when he was a trifle too obstreperous one time, and it causes him, as well as ourselves, some anxiety. It rather spoils his looks too. He has a genuine liking for expensive fur coats, hats, leather jackets, etc., in fact, most anything chewable in which he can lay his teeth, so we have to be very particular as to where we lay our belongings. He has chewed up quite an expensive amount already in his young life. He's worse than a goat or a monkey in that regard.

Whether this will get to you before next year is a question, for latest reports say that no ships are leaving for the States at the present time. Possibly there will be a mail route established via the North Pole. Steamships between the two countries will very likely start to run in a short while, adequately protected by war-vessels. We'll be in the self-same fix for mails from the States ourselves, which saddens me considerably. Don't

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permit that to stop you from writing, though, by any manner of means. Letters will get through somehow before very long.

My best wishes to you and yours, Leah. If you become a Red Cross nurse, in the event of war, come over here to work in Paris at the Amer. Ambulance. Then I'll get a German to shoot me up.

Your amiable "poilu,"

EDMOND.

P. S. Use the escadrille's address when you write.

Escadrille N–124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
February 16th, 1917.

DEAR TWINKLING ONE,

Yours of just a month ago came on Wed., so you see how prompt *I* am—*sometimes*. I've got a terrible lot of other letters which should be answered, but just thirty-two and a half seconds ago I said Oh, d— hang them! and pulled out yours and, anyway, it has been well over a month since I last used ink for your sake, so I'd better get to it if I want to make you take life cheaply and run off with me some day in apple-blossom time in a *one*-place aeroplane—you, of course, hanging on to the rudder.

You see since I last wrote to you I've come out to the front and am on active service. I came out just after the middle of last month. Since I've been flying over lines quite a bit, but until yester-

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day's fights I've not had much excitement. The weather has been wonderful of late for flying, only very, very cold and frosty. These last few days have become warmer and to-day a little rain has fallen.

Well, now, what do you think of peace and doves? War may be hammering at your doors yet, Star, and you'll be fitting on the pretty uniform of a Red Cross nurse and singing to the wounded soldiers and looking more lovable every day,—superlatively so.

Won't you drop in for tea some afternoon and play and sing for us? We'd just love to have you, dear Star. You could even dance, for the room is fairly big with a stove in the middle to make it comfortable these chilly days. Please come!

Au revoir. Yours,

EDMOND.

February 20th, 1917.

MY DEAR UNCLE CLAIR,

Since writing to you last I have completed my training as an "aviateur militaire" and have come to the front. I joined our escadrille of American volunteers soon after the middle of January and have been flying on active service ever since—when the weather permitted. Up until this last week it has permitted pretty regular flying and I've seen—or rather participated—in some very exciting combats with enemy airmen. On Thursday morning of last week I got into a hot old

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scrap with two enemy biplane machines quite a ways back of their first line, and only four hundred metres over several of their anti-aircraft batteries. I succeeded in driving both adversaries earthward after some lively manœuvring and exchanging of machine-gun fire, but the batteries made it decidedly hot for me after it was over. I made swift tracks for the upper atmosphere in a good zigzag course to outwit the range-finders at their nasty game of placing shells under my tail and around my wings in attempts to clip them for me. Life here is not all one long sweet idle dream.

A final break with the Central Powers certainly seems inevitable for the States before very many days. Everything seems to point that way. Really when one looks at the thing squarely in the face it would seem that Germany will really benefit by having the States join the Entente Powers against her. It would tend to greatly reduce the present output of munitions from the States to the Allies as they would be forced to make them to increase our absurdly small supply, other supplies now being sent over here would be greatly diminished. Germany could incite an invasion on our southern border by the Mexicans and innumerable quantities of internal troubles on the part of the pro-Germanic subjects of our free-born country—one of the most deplorable facts to be faced in the event of war—and the blockade which German submarines are waging could extend, without question of neutrality, to American commerce aid-

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ing the Allies. It would shorten the duration of the war without much doubt, but in the end it would be Germany's profit. Every one connected with diplomatic matters seems to be practically certain of actual hostilities within a mighty short time. Thank Providence that President Wilson at last took the stand he did when such outrageous dictations were sent by Germany on American shipping. It was astounding and enough to roil the most pacific of pacific American citizens. It's utterly deplorable that it didn't roil our eminent statesman, W. J. Bryan. So one ought to take violent measures against him.

We are delightfully situated with regard to quarters and in spite of the scarcity of coal we manage to keep warm in our attractive little living (and mess) room. We eat splendidly and have good times when off duty. We've hired a piano from a family in a near-by village and have a small victrola with a good supply of American and French records to amuse us and our French aviation friends. There are at least five of us who can make the ivories sound to certain degrees like real music.

The Christmas holidays passed so quickly that I didn't get much chance to write. I had a few days in Paris after leaving Pau on Dec. 10th and spent Christmas Day there also, but was pretty busy the rest of the time with flying and then I came out here in January. Now it's all grim work until the conflict ends some day in next year, or the one after that.

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Love and warmest wishes to you all and every best wish for this new year.

Affectionately,

EDMOND C. C. GENET,
Caporal Pilote.

Escadrille N–124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
February 24th, 1917.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

I haven't written to you since the thirteenth and you must be thinking something has happened to me although I have written to Rod since that date and you'll see his letter most likely by the time this gets to you. Thus you will know that on the morning of the fifteenth I had my first two real aerial combats and, as I told him all about them, etc., I needn't go into details here all over again. Since then the days have been extremely dull and muggy, and we've done practically no flying at all. I've used a good deal of the time in writing letters and notes in my memorandum, etc., and my war-diary, but haven't half succeeded in diminishing the pile of letters I had to answer.

. . . . . .

Thursday of this week several of us motored up to see the Legion which we learned was stationed not far from where we are, and I saw several of my old fighting mates including the little South American friend of whom you must remember my writing about quite frequently. He was well and we were

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both mighty glad to see each other again. I've written to him off and on as he has to me, and have sent him some magazines and lately some cigarettes. We may run up there again before long as several of us have been "légionnaires" and we know many old comrades who are still there. My old 4th Company is now the 2d. Although Ester, the S. A., is in the 9th. They were quartered in as muddy and desolate a little hamlet as you could ever imagine. They've been holding the trenches in the very same secteur where we were in May and June of 1915. Every time I fly over the lines I go over that part and several other parts wherein I have lived and suffered in rain and mud and bombardment with the Legion. It brings back all the old days every time I gaze down on those spots from my Nieuport. My fight of last week was directly over a fair-sized town just behind the enemy's lines toward which I used to gaze on many a weary guard in our trenches. I never thought then that I'd be a birdman and flying over those hostile lines far into the enemy's territory. It felt good to go back and see the Legion and realize that I no longer was one of them, though I sure don't regret the times I spent with it.

Some officers are coming to have dinner with us this evening, so I must quit this and get tidied up, as it's near the hour now. All kinds of love, dear little Mother, and heartiest wishes to all.

Ever your devoted "poilu,"

EDMOND.

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Escadrille N–124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
March 5th, 1917

DEAR RIVERS,

Most hearty congratulations for winning your commission. It's surely splendid and I'm as delighted as any one could ever be over it, too, dear brother. You certainly deserved it. You studied and worked hard enough for it, I'm sure. I'm glad "Mac" won his lieutenancy, too. He must feel fine over that. Now, b'gosh, I've got to stand at attention and call you "Sir." I'm only a bloomin' *caporal*, though I may be a sous-officier by the time this reaches you as I have nearly flown enough hours over the enemy lines to receive my promotion. Even then I wouldn't want to change places with you in spite of your stripe. This is too wonderful a life over here with entirely too many possibilities of stripes in the future.

The day before yesterday we had a hurried call to chase a German machine inside our lines, and I was the first to start out. I was in so much of a hurry to get off that I started out with the wind too much on one side, and it turned me over in less time than you can think of it. The machine was completely smashed up. I was mad as any one could be. I didn't even get a scratch either.

Yesterday I got lost while at 4,000 metres over the enemy lines (I went in alone more than forty miles in the morning) and I landed away down at Paris. The mist was terrible. I filled up with

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fuel, returned to the lines and got lost once more away up in the English sector north of the Somme, and had to land at one of their aviation-camps to find out where I was. Coming down the lines again, I ran out of fuel and had to land at a French aviation-camp to replenish my stock, had lunch with an escadrille there and returned chez nous afterward. Altogether I covered about 450 kilometres between 7.40 and 2.00 o'clock in the afternoon—about 4 hours' flying. I was some tired, as the mist was extremely thick and it was nerve-racking to pilot through it.

Escadrille N–124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
March 8th, 1917.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

I am answering your letter of February 7th, which arrived several days ago. On the 5th, I answered a letter from Rivers which I received the previous day telling me, among other things, that he really had passed the exams. and had received his coveted commission as Ensign in the 8th Div. I sure was delighted over that fine piece of news. It's splendid and he deserves all possible credit for his efforts. I presume it is as you write—that Rod will have to remain a much longer time than was expected, down along the border while the country is on the brink of a possible war. He must be completely fagged out with the place there.

Do please, dear Mother, be easy with yourself.

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Recognize the fact that you are too well along in life to be working as hard and taking as many risks to your health as you used to do and were able to stand. You simply won't be able to stand it very long, but will break down and then where will you be? Do be careful, Mother.

The day before yesterday I got my nose and one cheek all frozen while flying over the lines. Yesterday the skin had all peeled off, but I put vaseline over it and now the new skin is forming. I'm a sight though, for the present, although it isn't very painful. I guess I really started to freeze up last Sunday for that morning I was up in the air nearly five steady hours, and it was extreme chilly, and then the sharp wind of the day before yesterday finished up the job. I scarcely noticed the chill wind at the time.

Last Sunday I was far into the German territory and got lost. I shouldn't have gotten lost but the mists all around were extremely thick and all I could see was the ground directly below me—a matter of 4,000 metres beneath me—and it was really simply luck that I got back over French territory, instead of getting more into enemy territory, before I ran out of fuel and had to land at an aviation-camp. After filling up I returned to the lines and got lost again up in the sector of the British forces and had to land at one of their aviation-camps to find out where I was. Altogether I was in the air nearly five hours that morning. It was quite a trying experience as the mists were almost too

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thick to make out one's direction. The only thing that I could rely on was my compass.

The Captain just asked me if I knew what were the sufferings of the men in the trenches during winter days such as we're having now. I guess he doesn't quite realize that I've had two winters out there with them. I realize as well as any of them what misery the troops suffer out there along those chill, wet, muddy lines. My own experiences there haven't been in any degree more comfortable than those of any of them.

Several of us motored over a second time last week to see the Legion, as it is near us in repose. We saw several of the Americans still in it and had three of them over to dine with us one day. One of the fellows, Casey by name, is from the art sections of Paris, where he worked previous to the war, and we're trying to secure permission for him to come over here for several days to draw our pictures. He wants to do so very much indeed. He is one of those who joined the Legion in August, 1914.

Must close now. It's lunch-time. If I'm in Paris on Sunday you may be sure I'll be on hand at the American Church for the morning service—perhaps also for early communion.

My name has been put in by the Captain for promotion to the grade of Sergeant, so I guess by another fifteen days I'll be one and be drawing about 80 cents a day for pay.

Heaps of love, dear little Mother. God bless you.

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Escadrille N-124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
March 15th, 1917.

MY DEAR RIVERS,

Yours from the "Granite State" came a day or so ago. In fact, I found it waiting here when I got back on Monday afternoon from spending the week-end in Paris.

It is fortunate that I got in when I did, for an order was issued yesterday suspending indefinitely all leave on account of forthcoming activities on the front. I managed to do all that I wished while there, so it doesn't cut much ice with me one way or the other now.

It seems to me that you are right about the price of your mess being a trifle steep, although, of course, you have to think of the service and the position. We, ourselves, over here in actual war are paying about six francs ($1.20) apiece a day for our fare and that does not include service. We eat splendidly—except for the service—I've no doubt but that we eat just as well as do you. The Franco-American Corps gives us so much a month to help pay for our mess.

My present pay is only about 48 cents a day as a corporal, but I've already been proposed for sergeant and the order should come in soon. I'm practically drawing the pay now because when the order comes it will read from the day I was proposed—the 10th—so I'll get pay from that date. A sergeant's pay per month is about 240 francs which is

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roughly $48. That is a big jump from corporal you see. Besides that, each of us receives about $20 a month for personal use, from the F. A. Corps, so you see we get nearly $70 per month as sergeant, quite sufficient on which to exist comfortably.

War seems far more certain now for you than it did when I last wrote. Every one over here connected with the military side of the U. S. says war is merely a question of days now. Major Parker seems sure of it. Another thing (I don't give it much credit yet, but it's worth thinking about) is that I have heard very indirectly lately that there are commissions already at Paris for all of us to be given immediately in the event of war—commissions appointing us either first or second lieutenants —according to our merits here on the front—in the U. S. Naval Aviation service. We would simply be taken over by our government, be commissioned, and remain here on the front as we are now. All that seems a good deal to be so. Major Parker assures me he feels sure that I shall find no difficulty in getting cleared should war come on. I'm not worrying about it too much, though it is on my mind all the time. He tells me not to cross any bridges before I come to them, which I'm following as pretty good advice.

You're right about not having very exciting prospects ahead of you should war come, if you all are to be in the coast-patrol reserve fleet. Maybe you'll be on the *Georgia*. She's in the Phila. Navy Yard attached to the reserve force now, I believe.

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You might have exciting times, even then, along the coast with submarines, but it's doubtful at that.

There's coming a time when the Aviation service will be completely separate from both the Army and Navy—the real Fifth Arm. It should really be that way anyhow. You ask me for an essay on French aviation if it is permissible for me to write about it. There are lots of things I can't tell you about on account of their secrecy, but I guess it won't bring any harm to either the French government or myself to give you the following facts:

All aviation corps are, of course, divided into the following groups: bombardment, artillery regulation, reconnoitring and chase and combat. The latter (chase and combat) is the kind to which we belong. It is composed of the smaller, lighter, and faster machines. The French use very few avions de chasse carrying two men. Practically all are monoplace machines. These comprise the Nieuport and Spad (both biplane avions) and the Morane monocock (not very much used). It is a monoplane. You probably already know what functions we have—protecting our lines and territory from invasion by hostile machines in order to prevent photographic work, reconnoitring, artillery réglage, and bombardment. We also protect our own machines of these last types over the enemy territory, although very exceptionally because there are certain escadrilles de chasse which are attached to these other groups as their protectors.

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Our chief duty is to patrol over the lines—sometimes only along the lines themselves, and other times going well into the enemy's territory to hunt down their machines, at the same time keeping our eyes open for movements of their troops, etc.

We generally go in groups of from two to four, or occasionally six—very rarely alone, particularly inside the German lines.

Reconnoitring and photography work is done principally by biplace machines such as the Sopwith, the bimotor Caudron and the Morane Parasol. This last is used more by the British than by the French. Farman biplanes do photography work, but their chief function is artillery regulation. The bombarding expeditions—particularly those carried on in the night at long distances—are effected by the heavy Voisin biplanes and frequently by Farmans. The Voisins are armed with a one-pounder cannon as well as a machine-gun. Sopwith monoplane machines are excellent as they are fairly rapid, easily manœuvred, are armed with two machine-guns—one forward, fixed stationary on the plane supérieure and fired by the pilot from his seat, and the second in the rear beside the gunner, from where he can aim and fire it in practically every direction—and they can offer a very formidable resistance when attacked. The Morane Parasols (the one plane is above the fusillage, giving it the appearance of a parasol) are likewise excellent for observation and photography, having, like the Sopwith, two machine-guns mounted in

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the same positions and therefore are easily defended. They are more fragile and dangerous to handle, though, than the Sopwith, and therefore are not quite so good.

The bimotor Caudron biplanes are excellent, fast, and very easy to manœuvre. They are armed with one machine-gun (movable) and the gunner (who is also the observer) is placed forward of the pilot. The Farman machines are along somewhat these same lines, but are much slower and far more difficult to handle quickly, presenting, therefore, much less resistance to attack—especially from the rear.

The motors made in France and used in aviation are far, far superior to any made in America. The English use French motors in their planes almost entirely. Germany has excellent motors, but two are merely copied from French ones. Their Mercédès is as good as any motor. The French Rhône rotary motor, though, far excels any other both in simplicity of running and in strength and durability. You will see in many American aviation periodicals the advertisements of the Gnome rotative motor and it is used a great deal there in aeroplanes. Over here it is only used by the French on some of their machines, such as the Blériot monoplane, which are used in their schools. The Rhône rotary is an improvement on the Gnome and it's a great improvement too. The French also have a rotary motor—the Clerget—which is very good.

I guess I've written enough about French avia-

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tion for you now without overstepping the limits of secrecy. I hope so. Ask me any questions, though, which you wish to and I'll answer them if permissible or I can.

You can probably find some fairly good books on aviation over there and talk as much as possible with aviation men, but *don't* believe all they say to you. Aviation is a pretty poorly known subject over there yet. They haven't had one-eighth of the practical experience which the French have gained over here since August, 1914. *And* they have *largely* profited by it.

"Jim" MacConnell, one of the fellows here who wrote such a good article about the escadrille in the *Atlantic Monthly* has had a longer account published in book form, called "Flying for France," by James M. MacConnell. You should get it and read it, for it is mighty well written and true.

Don't let the Boche blow up anything around old Manhattan Isle. They've done sufficient damage already. To-day's paper says they have just torpedoed "sans avertissement" the *Algonquin*, carrying the American flag.

I hope some one of our armed merchant-vessels see and fire upon a German U-boat without any warning soon and sink it. They've got orders to do just that, so let them do it. Strafe the damned Boches!

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Escadrille N-124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
March 20th, 1917.

DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

We are all feeling decidedly blue because our oldest pilot of the escadrille—one of the four who were its first members (the other 3 were Prince, Chapman and Rockwell)—has been missing since yesterday morning and undoubtedly is on the other side of the lines—either dead or wounded and a prisoner. He is MacConnell, the one who wrote such a good account of the escadrille which was published in *World's Work*. He and I were out together yesterday morning over the new territory just captured by the French and English, and about ten o'clock, while well inside the enemy lines, we encountered two German biplane machines. I mounted to attack the nearest and left Mac to take care of the second, and it is the last seen of him. There were plenty of clouds and mist, and after I had finished my scrap with the one I attacked, in which I got one of my main upper wing-supports cut in half, a guiding-rod cut in half, several bullets through my upper wing, and half an explosive bullet in the side of my left cheek, which stunned me for a moment, I went down lower to look for "Mac" and help him if he was hard pressed, and looked all around and waited for fifteen minutes for him to show up, but I could see neither him nor the German machine which must have attacked him. My upper wing was in great

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danger of breaking off, the support being half cut through, my wound was bleeding and pained quite a bit, so I finally headed back for camp, hoping Mac had perhaps missed me and gone back before me. I had a driving wind to face going back and had to fly very low to get beneath heavy clouds to see my way. When I got to ground on our field I looked in vain for Mac's machine. When I asked if he had returned my worst fears were confirmed. He had not, and we have, up to the present time, had absolutely no news of him whatsoever. It's terrible, little Mother. I feel horribly over it, for I was the only one with him. If I could have only seen what became of him—been nearer to him while fighting, but I had to go up to keep both machines from coming down on him. I headed off one and fought it against all odds, because I couldn't gain, in the short time I had, an appreciable advantage over him, and his gunner was able to shoot much easier than I as we were on the same level circling around each other. It was one of his first shots which hit me. It stunned me for a second, but I kept at him and fired until we nearly collided. Then I dived to look out for Mac and then couldn't locate him. A battery kept shelling me as I came down. Poor Mac, Mother! I've been out of my mind ever since getting back yesterday. My wound is slight. It was dressed as soon as I got back. It pains dully, but will be all right soon and won't keep me from continuing my duties. I'd have gone out to-day, but for the rotten condition

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of the weather—wanted to go yesterday afternoon to look for Mac or his machine if it had fallen inside the German lines, but my machine had to be repaired. Our lieutenant and Lufbery did go out to look for signs or news of him, but found nothing. It's miserable luck. The Commandant told me I did bravely—I wish I could have done more—have saved poor Mac from his fate.

Since last Friday there has been an enormous amount of activity on this front. The big French and British advance has given us all a strenuous amount of work each day. Friday I was after enemy observation balloons. Saturday morning at 6.10 several of us went out on an alert after Zeppelins. I was the one to attack as I carried incendiary bullets, the others were my guard. Unfortunately we were sent out in a wrong direction and missed the Zeppelins and one of the fellows and myself became lost above the clouds and had to land for lack of fuel in the west of France. We got back at one-thirty that afternoon. One Zeppelin had been brought down by anti-aircraft battery fire just South of Compiègne at 6.15 that morning. Had we gone up above the clouds toward the east that morning, instead of heading north as we did, we would have undoubtedly sighted the Zeppelin and consequently your "third" might now be a Zeppelin conqueror. Its motors were out of order and it was drifting south with the wind when brought down in flames by the batteries. I could have caught it easily and set it on fire immediately with

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my incendiary bullets. My luck wasn't with me then.

On Sunday I was out reconnoitring with patrols both morning and afternoon over the new territory gained by the French and yesterday I had the experience with MacConnell which I've already told you.

The retiring Germans have completely torn up the country, burned the villages, carried off many of the civilian population—especially the old men and young women, those left have been outrageously mistreated, half starved and left with their homes in destruction. Trees have been cut down, or half cut, so they would fall over with the wind and obstruct routes. Roads were blown up everywhere and railroads destroyed. Regions have been flooded and all kinds of other things done to impede the advance, and all supplies of food, etc., have been taken by them. The ground captured by the Allies is virtually a barren waste. It was very interesting to fly over this territory just before the attacks—while the villages were being burned by the enemy. Practically no opposition up to date has been offered by the retiring Germans. There has been little loss of life and the advance has really been carried out by the French and English cavalry. It's quite a change from the trench warfare. The French civilians whom the enemy left in the villages when they retreated were so overjoyed when the French troops came that they fell on the soldiers' necks and embraced and kissed

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and wept over them. The children shouted and danced and waved French flags at us as we flew at a low altitude over them these last few days. It was very novel and exciting. Péronne and all the region between Roye and Soissons has been taken and the advance is continuing every day. It is cheering everybody up.

The new Russian government just set up seems to be in better favor than the old one was and the French are patching up satisfactorily their internal political troubles, so the news all around is good, and now it seems very certain that the States will be with the Allies in full measure very soon. Even far-away China has thrown off relations with the Huns.

Don't worry, dear little Mother, over my wound or anything else. God has been very good to me thus far and He knows best what shall become of me. I'd be very willing to have a dozen such wounds if poor MacConnell were only back with us. I'll avenge him if it costs me my own life.

Every bit of love to you, dear Mother. God bless you and keep you well and happy for long, long years to come for

Your devoted son,

EDMOND.

Escadrille N–124.
Secteur Postal 182, France.
March 27th, 1917.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

To-day a mail from the States arrived—the first in nearly three weeks. It brought me your letters

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of the 6th and 11th, and I suppose you can easily guess the consequence of my state of mind after reading the one of the 11th and its enclosure. I don't know now why I've been hoping and trusting for cheerful news of the one girl I've always set my heart on and to whom I've tried to be genuinely true these past four or five years when it has seemed inevitable for months now that there was no hope. The simple truth itself is unbearable; can you half-way imagine what it means to me to hate to realize that she has been receiving my letters all these months and has just permitted me to keep on and on without telling me directly and instantly of her engagement? What particular matter does it make after all, though, when one comes straight down to it? Time is capable of healing over all wounds even if the scar remains forever—just as it is doing with the gash in my cheek made last week by that bullet, only that is infinitesimal in comparison to the size of this other wound.

Unless the conflict stops suddenly very soon there isn't much chance of my ever getting back to you all, anyway. Don't grieve, dear little Mother, because I write that. God knows best. I feel sure that He had some big purpose in guiding me over here and what more glorious cause can a volunteer give his life for these days than this great one men are dying for every day over here on these battle-fields?

Jim MacConnell has just gallantly earned a

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lonely grave out behind the present fighting-lines. I wrote to you last Tuesday—the day after he and I were out together, when we had to return, wounded, without him and with no definite news of him. Since then the Germans were forced back further and finally French troops came across a badly smashed Nieuport with the body of a sergeant pilot beside the ruins. All identification papers were gone and the d——d Boches had even taken off the flying clothes and even the boots and left the body where it had fallen. The number of the machine was sent in and so we knew it was Mac's. The following morning, after a flight over the lines, I spiralled down over the location given and found the wreck — almost unrecognizable as an aeroplane, crushed into the ground at the edge of a shell-torn and wrecked little village. I circled over it for a few minutes and then back to camp to report. Our captain flew over that way the same morning to see about the body. When he returned he told us about the clothes and shoes having been stolen and said that Mac had been buried beside the road next to which he had fallen. There is no doubt but that he was killed during the combat in the air and the machine crashed down full speed to the earth. Since that day I've chased two Boche machines, but could get up to neither, but I'll get one yet and more than one, or be dropped myself, to avenge poor Mac. I've already been told I was reckless in the air over the lines, but after this I vow I'll be more than reckless, come what may.

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Mother, my blood boils and thirsts after those accursed Huns. They're brutes and fiends and daily they grow worse.

Mac and myself have been proposed by Capt. Thénault for army citations which will bring me the Croix de Guerre. It seems a mighty slight thing to get decorated for, considering that poor Mac has died to win his. I'd have had a citation for what I did at Champagne if I had done what most of my comrades did there after the battle—deliberately asked for it—but that isn't my way of winning laurels. It has been pretty hard since though to meet again and again these fellows who have been decorated for service in the American Ambulance Field Service for carrying wounded back of the lines—fellows who return to America after half a year's service over here and they are petted and idolized by every one—and know that I went through what I did with the Legion for a year and a half in the very face of Hell and have had nothing to display for it all. I'm not the only American who has served in the Legion since the beginning, or near it, who is that way either. There are two or three others who were even wounded who were never decorated. Poor Dowd was one of them, and he had his right hand badly lacerated at Champagne, which put him in a hospital for six months, after which he volunteered to continue his services in aviation—where he was killed while training, as you know. I've seen so many, many fellows decorated for very insignificant wounds and services that it is quite a sore subject with me.

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We have a little sweetheart for our "Whiskey-Man," the cub lion, mascot of the escadrille. She's a 2½ months old lioness whom we call "Soda." "Whiskey" is now about a year old and just as gentle and nice a lion as ever existed. Since his little fiancée came he has been ever so much nicer and more contented than ever before. "Soda" is rather snappy and not half as nice as her "Man." We still feed her on warmed milk. "Whiskey" eats like a young pig—anything that is offered him. He plays around with us all day long. He just loves to be rolled on his back and tickled.

I'm mighty well obliged to you, dear Mother, for telling me everything there was to be told about —— which you knew. If I had but heard directly from her, though, I'd feel far more satisfied. So the world rolls on and we learn new things each day —even though often they bring discouragement and sorrow to us. There's one beloved sweetheart I know will always be mine. That is you, Mother dear. Thank God for that—for you.

Your loving "third,"

EDMOND.

Escadrille N-124.
Secteur Postal 164, France.
April 15th, 1917.

MY DEAR LITTLE MOTHER,

We've had lots of flying to do and I have been able to do very little writing. There is an awful stack of unanswered letters in my box now. I just can't get down to them so they steadily keep collecting.

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I was in Paris over April 1st and 2nd as the memorial service for MacConnell was held on the morning of the 2nd at the Amer. Church in Paris. There was a very large attendance, including Ambassador Sharp and several high French military officials. I sat with Major and Mrs. Parker, and stayed at the hotel with them during the two days. Paul Rockwell came up from the south, where he is on his delayed honeymoon with his wife, for service, so I saw him quite a bit during the two days. He went south again the next day. Only 3 of us could be allowed to go in for the service as there was too much activity on the front for the escadrille. On Monday of last week several of us went in to get new machines. A lot of new fellows have come out lately to join us so we had to have additional machines. I didn't get one after all, but we were there five days before we could come back.

Cheer up, little Mother, things are coming out O. K. for us all.

My citation for Croix de Guerre has been granted but I have not yet received it, so am still waiting to be decorated. It will come very soon now. My nomination for grade of sous-officier is still on its way, so I'm not yet wearing my stripes. It should be here any day now, though.

The day before yesterday I had two combats during the afternoon, but neither resulted in anything important. The Huns are becoming much more active along here now and fights occur prac-

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"Whiskey-Man," the cub lion, mascot of the escadrille.

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tically daily. Lufbery, our "ace," brought down his 8th avion the other day, and our Lieutenant, De Laage, brought down his 2nd and 3rd on Sunday last.

What is going to be done with us now that the States are in is still a mystery. There have been lots of rumors in the papers, etc., but all based on no definite facts. We're waiting for news. I don't believe that we'll get one quarter the recognition which is due us, but what can we expect when up to the time the U. S. came in it regarded us as ones who had forfeited our right of citizenship for being over here, and when our country is run so much by politics?

If possible, I am going to come back on a furlough if I can get authority to go from the French. That will be a month or two yet, so you'll know later what I'll do about that. I sure would like to have a little leave over there, dear Mother. Practically all the others who have been here 2 or 3 years (and several who haven't) have been to the States on leave for 3 or 4 weeks, so I guess I'm entitled to the same. It will be all the better to be over there now that the States are one of the Allies. I can wear a uniform and not be afraid of getting interned by my own government for being unneutral. If I get cleared up I'll come.

Take heed of our change of postal secteur. We moved about 2 weeks ago.

Yesterday, under the eye of a motion-picture machine, for pictures which will be shown later

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in America and France and elsewhere also, we displayed the glorious Stars and Stripes for the first time in history on a European battle-front. Pictures were also taken of the Captain, Thaw, and Lufbery leaving the field in their machines for a patrol over the lines. Keep watch for the pictures —perhaps you will be able to see them yourself.

So Rivers is at sea? I wish he'd write and tell me all about it. I don't suppose he is more than simply cruising along the Atlantic coast on guard for submarines. Where is Rod? Has he really returned from Texas yet?

I think that the United States coming in with the Allies has really been the crowning assurance for all of a sure and complete victory. I got to Paris just a few days after war was declared, and what a change I found there! American flags were flying everywhere among those of the Allies, and everybody was feeling far brighter and more cheerful than I have ever seen them before. It was fine to see Old Glory waving everywhere, Mother. We've waited so long for it to fly over here and all Americans have had to be restrained before. Now it's entirely changed and all are happy and contented and hopeful. One can see that it has made a big moral impression on the French soldiers.

Your devoted, loving "third,"

EDMOND.

Genet was killed the day after writing this letter, April 16.

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CONCLUSION

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CONCLUSION

The following is an account of Genet's death by Lufbery, the famous "Ace" of the Lafayette Escadrille:

DEAR MISS HARPER:

As Edmond Genet was one of my best friends I will be able to tell you everything I know about his death.

One afternoon, at half-past two, Genet and I were ordered to make a patrol on the lines between St. Quentin and La Fère. I was leading and everything seemed to be all right. At about 3 o'clock somewhere around Moy the German anti-aircrafts started to shell us. I saw very plainly three shells bursting right behind Genet's machine, about one hundred yards from it. As we get that very often I did not pay much attention to it. Many times I myself had been shelled much closer than that and nothing had happened. Anyway, I don't know if he got hit or not, but he suddenly turned around and went toward the French lines. I followed him for about three or four minutes to make sure that he was taking the right direction, after that I went back to the lines to finish my patrol duty. There is another thing: Genet that

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day was not feeling well. He went out in the morning for a moment, and when he landed he told us that there was something wrong with him and went to bed. We did not want to let him go the afternoon sortie, but he insisted, saying he was now much better.

Soldiers who saw him fall say that the machine got in a corkscrew dive at about 1,400 yards high, finally a wing came off and the whole thing crashed on the ground.

I do not know exactly what happened, but might suppose that, being ill, he fainted. He also might have got wounded by a piece of shell.

Genet was a nice little fellow and everybody in the Escadrille was very fond of him. He was very brave and I am sure he would have become one of the best.

Letter from Sergeant Lovell to Paul Rockwell:

April 16th.

MY DEAR PAUL:

It seems that I am destined always to announce to you bad news. This time it is dear little Genet who is dead. He has been killed this afternoon, flying in the company of Lufbery. On account of the clouds they flew low. The special German batteries were firing at them continuously. Suddenly Lufbery noticed that Genet had made a half-turn as if going back. He tried to follow but lost sight of him in the clouds. . . . He was very

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From a photograph, copyright by Sterling Heilig.

Gun-carriage bearing the body of Genet, surrounded by guard of honor.

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much surprised upon his return to the camp to see that Edmond had not returned. A few minutes later we received by telephone the news that Genet had fallen five kilometres within our lines. Lieutenant De Laage, Lufbery, Haviland, and I took the light motor of the squadron and rushed to the relief station. There we found the dead body of Genet. He had been instantly killed. I saw the apparatus later and I have never seen so complete a wreck, and I have seen numbers. He had fallen with the motor in full speed in the middle of the road, which proves that the German shell had killed him or rendered him unconscious. I had flown with him in the morning very early, and in the afternoon we were to have flown together, but as he seemed tired I advised him not to fly, and I went up with Thaw. When I returned I learned that Genet had gone up with Lufbery. Haviland, whose avion was disabled, had tried to borrow Genet's avion to fly in his place, but Edmond refused, insisting he felt all right and he flew—to his death. For myself, I have lost a very dear friend, and a courageous comrade of combat: the squadron has lost one of the most conscientious pilots that it has ever had or ever will have. Edmond fell a few hundred metres from the spot where Mac fell four weeks ago. He will be buried at Ham tomorrow. I am happy in one thing, and that is that he learned yesterday evening that his citation is now official, and also that the German avion with which he had fought when MacConnell was

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killed has been compelled to land on French soil and that its crew have been made prisoners.

Sincerely,

WALTER.

Paul Rockwell himself, writing of Genet in the *Guerre Aérienne*, tells of hearing first from "a celebrated American surgeon, Doctor David Wheeler, of one of the young Légionnaires, a descendant of Citizen Genet, and that he was one of the bravest and most attractive boys he had ever met. I found him truly what Wheeler had described him, simple, modest, of fine character and of an indomitable bravery." They became great friends, and of Genet's death Rockwell wrote thus beautifully:

MY DEAR MRS. GENET:

I feel a sympathy with you that I cannot find words to express. I would have written you ere now, but the loss of dear little Edmond coming right after that of Jim gave me such a feeling of the "blues" that I could not write.

Anyway we know that Edmond fell for something worth while, and that he was so fine an idealist he didn't mind dying for the cause. He is over there with Kiffin and Jim and the other boys and it will not be long until we will be with them too.

I think that one enters eternity with the same force and strength that one quits this world with, and that one falling in battle in the full bloom of youth and energy has a better place in the next world than those who linger here and die of illness

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or age. Anyhow I would change places with any one of the boys who have died so gallantly.

. . . . . .

Distinguished tributes came also from high places:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

15 January, 1918.

MY DEAR MRS. GENET:

May I not take the liberty of expressing my sympathy for you in the loss of your gallant son and at the same time, if I may without seeming inconsistent, congratulate you from the bottom of my heart on the record he made for himself, which must have mixed your deep grief with genuine pride?

Your two sons are, I know, in the service of their country. I admire instances of this sort very much indeed and hope that you will accept these few lines as an expression of my friendship and admiration.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

Mrs. Albert Rivers Genet,
Ossining, New York.

AMBASSADE
DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE AUX ÉTATS-UNIS

Washington, June 21, 1917.

MADAME:

The lack of your address, for which I had to write to a friend of mine, is the cause of my offering

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to you at such a late date the expression of my heartfelt condolence for your great loss.

Well worthy of his family and of the two noble countries from which he hailed, your son, who had been so long spared by the enemy's bullets, has fallen for the cause of liberty. His memory will ever be cherished among us as well as among his American companions.

Be assured that I sincerely feel with you in these sad hours and believe me, Madame,

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) JUSSERAND.

Mrs. Alfred Rivers Genet,
Ossining, N. Y.

FOREIGN SERVICE COMMITTEE, AERO CLUB OF AMERICA
42 FAUBOURG POISSONNIÈRE

Paris, 26th January, 1918.

To the family of the late
Edmond C. Genet, Volunteer Aviator.

The Aero Club of America, recognizing the heroic efforts of the American Volunteer Aviators, courageous sons of America inspired by the generous and lasting friendship of Lafayette for Washington, and as heroes have sacrificed their lives for France and the cause of liberty, thereby setting a noble example to America, who is now as a nation fighting for the same cause, wishes to commemorate the memory of Mr. Edmond C. Genet, by sending to his family, as a tribute, the highest honor which it is

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theirs to bestow, the SPECIAL WAR MEDAL OF THE AERO CLUB OF AMERICA.

This medal is being executed and struck in France, and as soon as ready will be forwarded to you.

Very cordially and sincerely yours,

(Signed) LAURENCE V. BENET,
Chairman of the Foreign Service Committee,
Aero Club of America.

(Signed) SIDNEY B. VEIT,
Honorary Secretary.

His commander, Captain Thénault, wrote to the boy's mother:

"Was he really twenty-four years old? He looked so young, like a kind child, and, however, he was a so courageous man. . . . It must be very painful for you to lose your dear son, but if that can be a little comfort to you, let me say that you were the mother of a great soul."

Genet was buried in the little military cemetery at Ham in the midst of a tempest of snow, the ceremony impressive in its simplicity. "At the moment even when the military celebrant (Captain Thénault) was reading the office and had just said, *Amen,* the sun pierced the clouds for an instant and illuminated the bier 'as a benediction from heaven,' as one of the pilots said later. Genet had requested in his last wishes to be enveloped in the French flag, if he should be killed within our lines, and that the two flags, the French and the Ameri-

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can, should be placed upon his grave. This was done."—*Rockwell in "La Guerre Aérienne."*

The mother of another young hero, Mrs. Hoskier, visiting the grave later, found it distinguished by a wooden cross, the two flags, and wreaths of beaded flowers placed there by the boys of the Escadrille.

The final and perfect word was France's:

Citation

"G. A. N., 13e Groupe de Combat. Le 20 avril 1917. Genet Edmond, Caporal à l'Escadrille, N. 124. Citoyen américain engagé au service de la France, a fait preuves des plus belles qualités d'ardeur et de dévouement, livrant des combats aériens dès son arrivée à l'Escadrille, effectuant des reconnaissances à basse altitude, et se dépensant sans compter. Le 10 mars 1917 a été blessé au cours d'un combat contre deux avions ennemis, et a refusé d'interrompre son service."

Captain Thénault's Address

The pride of commanding brave and courageous soldiers often carries with it cruel offsets.

To-day we are conducting to his tomb one of our comrades, Genet—a valiant soldier.

Born in the State of New York, 1890, he voluntarily left his country in order to join—two years ago—for the cause which he believed right—the Foreign Legion.

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Captain Thénault delivering the funeral discourse at the grave of Edmond Genet.

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There he gained that decoration (the fourragère) which he was so proud to wear, and last year aviation tempted him. He at once gave promise, as before, of a brilliant career. The only solicitude of his chiefs was to teach him moderation. With his juvenile ardor he was always ready to fly, whether to attack an avion or burn a drachen.

He was young, and he seemed even younger. He was our Benjamin, and we cherished him as in a family one prefers the youngest, the weakest. But his heart was not weak, as on many occasions he caused us to see.

A month ago, during our advance, flying low with his comrade MacConnell, in order to see whether the Germans were not traitorously lying in wait for our soldiers, they were surprised by an enemy escadrille. MacConnell had not the time to stand his ground; but Genet straightened, swift as a flash of lightning, and engaged in the struggle. He put the enemy to flight, disabled one and returned with his cheek cut by a ball. Rest? never! He was not dead. To fight for France was his dream, and yesterday, disdainful of the storm raging, during a patrol, an enemy shell reached him. He fell. At a good altitude he still had sufficient strength to return within our lines to die.

He loved his country, most certainly, but in his last wishes, which one cannot read without being strongly moved, after having sent a touching farewell to his mother—who will weep, over there—he said: "If I die, wrap me in the French flag, but

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place the two colors together upon my grave, to show that I died for the two countries."

Then he added, addressing his comrades, "Thank you, my friends; may God guide you to great success, and give much honor to this great nation and to this glorious cause for which we fight. May France live forever."

My dear friend, farewell. Respectfully I salute your memory which we shall cherish, and before the grave of the first soldier fallen for the two flags —the Stars and Stripes, and the Tricolor, in the Great War, we say: "Thanks to America for having given to the light sons such as Thou." Farewell.

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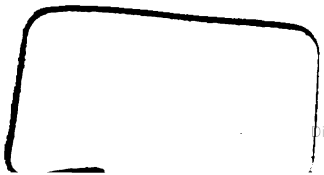

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